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THE KINGDOM WITHOUT FRONTIERS

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THE KINGDOM WITHOUT FRONTIERS

THE WITNESS OF THE BIBLE TO THE MISSIONARY PURPOSE OF GOD

BY

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PREFACE

It is, perhaps, some excuse for the appearance of this book that there does not seem to be anything else available on the subject.

Several friends have been good enough to read my manuscript and help me with their criticisms, but I must record my special gratitude to Prof. J. E. McFadyen, who made a number of valuable suggestions. Even apart from this, I owe so much to his writing and teaching that there must be many unconscious echoes of him in these chapters. My wife and Miss Gladys Taylor have also helped me in preparing the book for the press.

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INTRODUCTION

In one of the ablest attacks ever made on Christianity, about A.D. 180, Celsus wrote: "If all the inhabitants of Asia, Europe, Africa, Greeks and barbarians to the uttermost ends of the earth could have a common religion, it would be a good thing, but any one who thinks this possible knows nothing." It is the purpose of this book to show that, foolish as the idea of a world religion may appear, Christianity none the less claims and must claim to be such a religion. If the Bible is in any sense the record of a divine revelation, it bears unmistakable witness to an unwavering purpose in the heart of God to gather into one all the nations of the earth.

The Bible is a missionary book, not because it contains isolated texts with a missionary flavor, but because the main line of argument that binds together all its volumes is the exposition, the unfolding, and the gradual execution of a missionary purpose. The Bible is the book of the world.

In the Bible House in London is a Library devoted exclusively to one Book. The shelves which line its walls contain over 15,000 volumes which represent the Bible or portions of the Bible in more than 700 different languages and dialects. Every year adds new proofs that the Bible can speak in all the languages of the world without losing its appeal. A visit to that Library might make Celsus think again. There is at least a religion whose sacred book has proved its power to make itself at home in every land, in Asia, Europe, and Africa, among Greeks and barbarians. The annual reports of the Bible Society are full of stories

of the way the Bible appeals to all sorts and conditions of men all over the world and speaks to them not as a foreign book but in accents that they can understand. The Hebrew Psalms have become the hymn book of "the holy Church throughout all the world." The longing of Erasmus in the Introduction to his New Testament has been met. "The sun itself is not more common and open to all than the teaching of Christ....And I wish (the scriptures) were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens."

The secret of this universal appeal of the Bible is that it speaks of Jesus Christ. In Him men of all nations have found One who transcends the bounds of time and race as no one else in the world's history. He is for all men, the supreme revelation of God to man. Because it tells His story the Bible in unique.

But this does not mean that God spoke only to the Jews. The Old Testament is only the record of the main line of divine revelation. It should cause no surprise or embarrassment to the Christian to find so much that is good and true in other religions. The light that shines in them is the same light that shines in Christianity, though the one may be the twilight and the other the noonday. This is apparently the meaning of the verse in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel (1^9). Peter and Paul found in the religious beliefs of those to whom they preached points of contact for the fuller truth. As the writer to the Hebrews sought to show that Christianity was the crown of Judaism, so some of the thinkers of the early Church found a preparation for Christ, a kind of "Old Testament," in the philosophy and religion of Greece. Tertullian, for example, in A.D. 200 pointed to the religious beliefs of the Gentiles as a testimony to the truths more clearly expressed in Christianity. The soul, he said, was by nature Christian. It accepted so many truths which Christians also held that it ought consistently to go further and

accept them in their more developed and reasonable Christian forms. Malachi, 400 years before Christ, actually declared that the sacrifices of the Gentiles are offered to Jehovah, and that He accepts them in preference to perfunctory and irreverent worship from Israel, if it is the best they can give with their knowledge and opportunities. (Mal. 1 R.V..)

When missionaries to-day work upon the same principle of friendly welcome to all that is noble in other faiths, and seek to show that Christ is "The Crown of Hinduism," they are following in the true Christian tradition. God has nowhere left Himself without a witness. "Christians," said the Bishops at Lambeth in 1908, "must never hesitate to look for what is good and true in (non-Christian religions), to recognize that they have had a place in the purpose of the one loving God of all the earth, and to try to lead men by the truths which they know to Him, the Truth, in whom all truths meet."

This book traces the development of the revelation of God's missionary purpose as recorded in the Bible. It begins with a description of Israel's early belief in a merely national God, and the tremendous challenge of Amos to the religion of his day. Then it expounds the magnificent ideal of the Prophet of the Exile of Israel as the missionary nation, and its reassertion in the book of Jonah. A study of the Gospels reveals the world outlook of our Lord, and the universal appeal of His teaching, re-inforced even by those incidents and sayings which seem at first sight to contradict it. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles shows the awakening of the early Church to its missionary vocation, and the daring faith of its pioneers. To the work and teaching of Paul, the greatest of these pioneers, a separate chapter is devoted. The last chapter tries to face the question whether we have any solid ground for believing that the Kingdom of God can come on earth, or whether, after all, Celsus was not right in thinking the whole missionary enterprise to be folly, a fruitless labor for the impossible.

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THE KINGDOM WITHOUT FRONTIERS

CHAPTER I

THE DARKNESS AND THE DAWN

"When Israel was a child then I loved him, and taught him to walk" (Hos. 11^{1-3}). There are few more fascinating studies than to trace in the Bible record the story of God's patient education of the Jewish people, to watch the toddling, stumbling, baby steps become manly strides. For Israel's religion was a gradual growth. It makes the divinity of the process all the more striking when we find that Israel started on the same level of crude paganism as her neighbor nations and gradually attained a religious faith which for purity and nobility has only once been surpassed in human history—by the Christianity which grew out of it.

Israel's history is sometimes spoken of as a spiritual pilgrimage, and it is a suggestive metaphor. But it was no unassisted search for a stationary goal. Religion may be more truly thought of as God's search for man than as man's search for God. It is certainly one of the great truths of Christianity that God seeks. He is more eager for the response of love and service from man than man is to render it, more ready to give Himself to His children than they are to receive. God is not elusive, hiding in the recesses of heaven from human search. He goes out to seek and to find. The initiative is always with Him. Man could not seek God, say the mystics, if God had not already found him.

It is always true that God has many things to say to us that we are not able to receive. In religion, as in all other realms of knowledge, we must learn by degrees. The multiplication table must always come before quadratic equations, the A B C before the reading of Robert Browning. The Bible is the story of the divine education of a people in the knowledge of Himself. It tells of the opening of the hearts and minds of men to the inflow of God's Spirit. As more and more they became qualified by experience to make use of new truths, so more and more they receive them.

The conceptions of God in the Bible are thus clearly not all on the same level. There are passages in the Old Testament where He is represented as very different in character from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marcion, a Christian of the second century, was so impressed by this that he believed that the God of the Old Testament was actually a different person and wished the Church to give up the use of the Old Testament on that account. It is certain that great damage has been done in Christian history by not recognizing the existence of these different levels. Christian men were so led to defend slavery and to teach the existence of witchcraft with the consequent abominable cruelties involved in the effort to suppress it. Marcion was, of course, wrong in his attitude, but the only possible alternative for the Christian is frankly to recognize the progressive nature of the divine revelation. As we shall see, these unworthy conceptions were outgrown even in the Old Testament, and there is no excuse for our holding them in the light of the life and teaching of Jesus, who is our Christian standard. It is not that there was any change in God Himself: He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. We cannot accept as true of Him anything even in the Bible which is inconsistent with His revelation of Himself in Christ. It is not that God was different, but that men could not yet understand. The striking fact is not that we find these crude ideas in the Old Testament, for they were once held by all men,

but that starting from these there grew to be the lofty revelation through the prophets and at last in the Son. Where once was darkness we see the light shining more and more unto the perfect day.

To appreciate the dawn let us first look at the darkness.

The Song of Deborah (Judges 5) presents us with a vivid picture of the religion of Israel in the early days, soon after the entrance to Canaan. In the opinion of scholars this poem is one of the very oldest parts of the Old Testament, and is probably contemporaneous with the event it celebrates, about 1100 B.C. Israel was apparently in thraldom under the Canaanites, and paying heavy tribute. The land was so swept by the spoilers that the highways were deserted and the Hebrew travelers kept to the rugged paths among mountains and glens. The people were unarmed and unorganized, until a woman named Deborah called upon Barak to take the lead. The clans gathered at their summons. When the Canaanitish army sent against them was entangled with its chariots in the marshy ground round the rain-swollen river Kishon, Barak, whose name means "lightning flash," suddenly led a charge down into the plain. The meteors flashing in the sky are taken by the disheartened Canaanites, thus caught under difficulties, as an evil omen, and they flee in panic. Their general, Sisera, takes refuge in the tent of a woman named Jael, who, after offering him food and shelter, treacherously kills him. The poem closes with a moving description of the mother of Sisera and her maids waiting for his return.

It is a striking poem, inspired by a passionate patriotism. But judged by Christian standards it is more warlike than religious, more patriotic than moral. Jehovah has no compassion for Canaan, He is the God of Israel only. Deborah gloats over the scene of desolation and destruction. Jael is praised for a murder which was a breach of the common Semitic law of hospitality.

It is thus as a merely national God and as a giver of vic-

tory over other peoples that Jehovah first appears in the literature of Israel. There are references to "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah." "Jehovah is a man of war" (Exod. 15^3). His inspiration is seen chiefly in the skill of the warrior: "Blessed be Jehovah my God, who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight" (Ps. 144^1).* Jehovah is an enemy to all the enemies of Israel: "I, Jehovah, will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries" (Exod. 23^{22}). He is the national God and He is expected to say "My country right or wrong."

There are many illustrations in the Old Testament of the prevalence of this belief in national gods, not only among the surrounding peoples, but also in Israel itself. It was held that every nation or tribe had its own god, whose jurisdiction was confined to his own territory; just as a king is ruler in his own country, but is only a king by courtesy outside it. If the subjects of a king travel they must obey the laws of the king of the country to which they go. So, it was believed, a god could be worshiped only in his own land.

This belief is quaintly illustrated in the story of Naaman, who came from Syria and was cured of his leprosy. On his return he wished to take with him two mules' burden of earth, in order that henceforth in token of gratitude he might worship Jehovah. He was going to spread this earth out in Syria where Rimmon was God, that by a kind of legal fiction he might worship Jehovah on a piece of His own country, on soil that would be for ever Israel! (2 Kings 5^{17}).

So one finds David complaining that his enemies are seeking to drive him from the land of Jehovah, "saying, 'Go serve other gods'" (1 Sam. 26^{19}). It is interesting to notice how this fear was still prevalent among the people at the time of the exile, so that Ezekiel has to protest against it,

* I quote the verse merely as expressing the idea. I am not suggesting that the Psalm itself belongs to these primitive days. As a matter of fact this verse is a quotation from Ps. 18^{34}, which many scholars regard as one of the earliest of the Psalms.

and to preach that exile from Jerusalem does not mean exile from Jehovah (Ezek. 11^{14-16}).

Again, one may point to the explanation of their defeat by Israel advanced by the Syrians (1 Kings 20^{23} R. V.) "Their god is a god of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain and surely we shall be stronger than they" (cf. v. 28). Jephthah, the semi-barbaric chieftain who sacrificed his daughter to Jehovah, has no doubt of the reality of the gods of other peoples (Judges 11^{23-24}). The story is told also of how Mesha, the king of Moab, by sacrificing his eldest son to Kemosh his god, roused him to give his aid against the invaders of his land (2 Kings 3^{26-27}).

Interesting, too, is the story of the plight of the Assyrian colonists (2 Kings 17^{24-28}). After a long siege the Assyrians had taken Samaria and carried away the Israelites as captives. The king of Assyria sent colonists from Babylon to Israel to people the partially emptied cities. In their new home the immigrants continued to worship their old gods instead of Jehovah "the god of the land." To punish them, the story runs, Jehovah sent lions which killed some of them. The colonists sent for help to the king, who gave instructions that one of the Israelitish priests who had been carried off should be sent to Bethel to teach them how to worship Jehovah. Only a native priest would understand the particular ritual He expected.

In the time of Elijah an attempt was made to set Jehovah and Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, side by side as gods in Israel. Elijah called upon the people to choose. It could not be Jehovah *and* Baal: it must be Jehovah *or* Baal. In Elijah the seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal and had remained true to Jehovah found a leader. In a stirring scene on Mount Carmel, Elijah faced the 50 prophets of Baal. At all costs the issue must be decided. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings

18[21]). The signal vindication of his faith brought the people to his side, and with fanatical ferocity they turned, led by him, upon the prophets of Baal and slew them. Whether Elijah believed Jehovah to be the only God is difficult to decide, but at least he was decided that He was the only God for Israel. For the mass of the people, at any rate, the issue then was not whether other gods existed, but which they would worship. The verdict was for monolatry, the worship of only one God, rather than for monotheism, the belief that only one God exists. (Perhaps the First Commandment was originally interpreted in this sense: "*Thou* shalt have no other God," not there *is* no other.)

Just as Israel ascribed its victories to Jehovah, so other nations ascribed theirs to their own gods. For example, in Sennacherib's inscription commemorating his campaign against Jerusalem and the Philistine cities in 701 B.C., he declared: "The might of the arms of Ashur my lord overwhelmed them." "With the help of Ashur my lord I fought with them and accomplished their defeat" (Taylor Cylinder, Col. 2). Compare the boasting message of the servant of this same Sennacherib to the people of Jerusalem: "Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?" (Remember the God of Samaria was Jehovah.) "Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (2 Kings 18[33-35]). In popular belief the defeat of the nation meant the defeat of the god of the nation. So the faith of Israel was severely tested in conflict with the conquering nations of Assyria and Babylon. The exile might well have meant the end of Jewish religion had it not been for the prophets.

If in the early days the religion of the Hebrews, in its

national character, its warlike foundation, its sacrificial system, was very like the religions of other Semitic peoples, it was unique in its possession of the prophets. The prophet of the Old Testament was an ambassador of God, a proclaimer of His will for men. He was not occupied in "writing history beforehand," a mere mouthpiece for messages about a far-away time, that would have been meaningless to himself and his hearers. He was concerned primarily with his own day and generation, preaching in the closest relation to the needs and events of the passing hour. It is just because their messages are so related to the historical situation that the prophets are so difficult for the modern reader to understand. And yet if we can learn to penetrate beneath the temporary form to the essential heart of their words, we shall find in them living power for to-day. For they spoke not of trivialities, but of the deepest meanings of life and of God, the eternal and abiding. God does not change. And man in his deepest needs is unchanged, much the same to-day in modern Britain as in ancient Palestine. So though the prophets spoke not of our time but of their own, because God spoke through them they proclaimed truths of eternal meaning and value.

It was through the prophets that God led their nation out into a wider faith that broke the bounds of nationalism. In this Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, was the pioneer. He was the first to proclaim together two great truths: God is righteous and He is Lord of the whole world.

In the time of Amos, about 760 B.C., Israel was enjoying a period of peace and prosperity. But though the wealth of the nation had enormously increased, the condition of affairs was far from satisfactory in his eyes. Most of the wealth was in the hands of a small class, while grinding poverty was the lot of the masses. Amos, himself a man of the people, speaks with contempt of the self-indulgent luxury of the rich. In place of the old mud-buildings they have summer and winter houses of stone, lavishly furnished and up-

holstered with ebony and ivory and silk. They pass their time in drunken banquets, men and women alike, indifferent to the need of their fellows. Their wealth was the fruit of extortion and profiteering with false weights and measures. The law courts were corrupt. Bribery secured the verdict and justice was out of reach of the poor. Their very religious festivals were stained by revolting immorality.

And yet these people were eminently religious, and most regular in bringing their tithes and offerings to their temple at Bethel. They performed the correct ritual and offered the proper sacrifices to Jehovah. They carried out, they thought, their part of the religious bargain. In return Jehovah was expected to provide prosperity and protection. Religion, as they understood it, had nothing to do with righteousness.

Stirred to fierce indignation by their oppression of the poor and the immorality of their worship, Amos burst upon the self-satisfied people in the midst of the merrymaking at a religious festival at their temple at Bethel, and denounced the whole business, threatening terrible divine vengeance if they did not mend their ways. Religion was not a question of buying protection from Jehovah by offering sacrifices. God did not want their sacrifices. The only service He cared for was goodness. "I hate and loathe your festivals. Your special services do not affect me at all. When you burn offerings to me I do not enjoy your gifts, and I take no notice at all of your richest sacrifices. Do stop worrying me with your noisy hymns: I cannot bear the music of your harps. What I want is an unfailing brimming river of justice and righteousness" (Amos 5^{21-24}, T. H. Robinson's translation. *Amos*, Adult School Union).

It was true that they stood in a peculiar relation to Jehovah. But that did not mean they could behave as they liked and count upon His unconditional favor and protection. Rather the very fact of their specially favored position brought added responsibility. To whom much is given, from them will much be required. "You only have I known

of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3^2). Jehovah is a righteous God and He demands righteousness of His worshippers.

The idea of the righteousness of God is so familiar to us that it is hard to realize that when Amos first taught it, it must have struck his hearers as a revolutionary innovation in religious thinking. Yet the great majority of the world's religions have offered men gods who cared nothing for the good character of their worshipers: immorality was demanded as part of the very worship of some of them. Plato disowned the religion of his day because of the wickedness of the gods. There is hardly a vice or crime for which some religious sanction cannot be found. "When Jesus came into the world, Judaism was the only religion (as distinct from philosophy) in existence which laid it down clearly and emphatically that God is good and demands goodness from men" (Robinson, *St. Mark's Life of Jesus,* p. 13). Even within Judaism the prophets had to keep on insisting that Jehovah desired mercy and not sacrifice (Hos. 6^6).

Not only was Jehovah righteous, He was also to Amos the only God of all the world. And these two beliefs are closely connected together. Different gods of varying character suggest different standards of right and wrong. But if right and wrong are right and wrong independently of time or place or people, then there is one standard of morality for the world. One moral law and one God go together. So at least Amos believed, and this belief breaks the bounds of nationality and makes religion universal. The approval of Jehovah is not to be secured merely by being an Israelite: it depends upon righteousness. And a man need not be an Israelite in order to be righteous. The fall of Israel might not mean the defeat of Israel's God, it might rather be the expression of the righteous judgment of that God. As Isaiah afterwards taught, the conquering Assyrian boasting in the power of his own gods might after all, though he knew it not, be only the rod in the hand of Jehovah (Is. 10^5). "For

right is right everywhere, and wrong is everywhere wrong. If the God of Israel was the God of justice, then His kingdom extended as far as justice did....When the Moabites burnt to lime the bones of an Edomite king they drew down upon themselves the judgment and punishment of the God of Israel (Amos 2^{1-3})....Thus, through Amos, the God of Israel, as the God of justice and righteousness, becomes the God of the entire world, and the religion of this God a universal religion."*

So in the opening verses of the book, Amos surveys the world of his time, and declares that upon all the nations the judgment of Jehovah will fall because of their crimes; Syria, Philistia, Phœnicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab—these no less than Israel and Judah are under His sway. Israel must not imagine that He does not care for other peoples. God has no favorites. But, objected the people to Amos, did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? Surely that is proof enough of His special favor. True, said Amos, Jehovah did bring you up out of Egypt, but He also brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir. There had been more than one exodus, and the movements of the very enemies of Israel had been guided by Jehovah. He is the God of all history and not of Israel's alone. He loves the far-away negro just as much as He loves them. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me. O children of Israel? saith the Lord" (Amos 9^{7}). "Can you think," wrote Gordon from the Sudan, "that God loves these black Arabs with the same love with which He loves Himself or you?"†

As Jehovah is Lord of history, so He is the God of nature. Jehovah "is the name of the God who made the Pleiades and Orion, and arranged that day should follow night and night follow day" (Robinson. *Amos,* 5^{8}; cf. 9^{5-6} and 4^{13}). He can

* Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel,* p. 46.

† Some of the strongest expressions of Jehovah's hostility to other nations are to be found in Deuteronomy, one of the keynotes of which is the love of Jehovah for Israel, *e. g.* 7^{9-24} and 20^{10-18}.

send a plague of locusts, a drought, famine, epidemic, earthquake, invasion, upon an unrepentant people (see chap. 4^{6-13}). There is no corner of the universe where Jehovah does not rule—in heaven and in Sheol, the place of the dead, on the heights of Mount Carmel and in the depths of the sea. The guilty Israelite cannot find anywhere a hiding-place from His relentless punishment (9^{1-4}).

The whole prophecy of Amos is a stern but magnificent proclamation of the unwavering punitive justice of an Almighty Judge. He shows us the Sun of righteousness arising, but there is little healing in His wings. The warmth of His love and mercy, of which Hosea was to tell, are absent from the preaching of Amos. The light he sheds is cold and severe, but it is the light of the dawn. "Amos is one of the most marvellous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates" (Cornill, *op. cit.*, p. 46).

CHAPTER II

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

In the year 597 B.C. the flower of the Jewish people were carried off into exile in Babylon with their king Jehoiachim. In his place the Babylonians set Zedekiah upon the throne after exacting an oath of loyalty. Rebellion led to reprisals, and in 586 Jerusalem, city and temple, was destroyed.

To many Jews these disasters meant the end of their religion. The blackened ruins of Jehovah's temple were proof that a stronger god than He had risen. Jehovah had been unable to defend His people as He had done in the times of Samuel and Elisha, or in the thrilling days of Isaiah when Sennacherib's army had melted away from before the walls of Jerusalem. In the 44th chapter of the prophecies of Jeremiah there is a vivid picture of the exiles in Egypt, whither a section of the people had fled, maintaining that all their misfortunes had come upon them because of the suppression of the worship of Ashtoreth, "the queen of heaven." In Assyria, Babylonia and Phœnicia, she ruled as goddess of love and war. "Since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (Jer. 44^{18}).

And how could the exiles, whether in Babylon or in Egypt, "sing Jehovah's song in a strange land"? (Ps. 137^{4}). As we have seen, the belief was widespread in the ancient world that each nation had its own god whose jurisdiction extended

only over his own land. Even for Hosea one of the worst terrors of the threatened exile of Israel was that the worship of Jehovah must cease when His people left their home land (9^{3-4}).

So 150 years later, when Judah in turn was carried into exile, the same belief apparently still prevailed among the mass of the people in spite of the teaching of the prophets. It never seems to have entered the heads of the exiles to set up a temple of Jehovah in Babylonia, though there is no reason to think that their captors would have raised any objection. And how the transplantation must have shaken their old national pride! Jerusalem the city of the great King, home of their hearts though it was, was revealed as a petty provincial town by the sight of the great metropolis of Babylon with its ostentatious wealth and gigantic buildings. And the Temple of Solomon must have seemed, if we may use modern terms, like some village Bethel beside Westminster Abbey. Small wonder that many of the Jews found irresistible the temptation to break away and worship the great gods of Babylon. The exile acted upon the nation like a sieve (Amos 9^{9}). No longer were religion and nationality coëxtensive and synonymous. Out of the state arose a Church of the faithful few. The "remnant" hoped for by Isaiah was born. But how could even the faithful remnant "justify the ways of God to men," how reconcile this exile with Jehovah's care for His people? The holy city was destroyed, Jehovah's Temple ruined, and His people captive in the hands of an alien power. And month passed into month and year into year, and there was no sign that Jehovah knew or cared. Or perhaps, almost worst of all, He knew and could not help.

Then in faith's blackest hour God sent His messenger. In the midnight darkness echoed the glorious words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God" (Isa. 40^{1}). Jehovah had not forgotten them: the exile was part of His plan, and one day, not far distant, He was coming to lead

His people home again. "Isaiah of Babylon," or Deutero-Isaiah, the author of Isaiah 40-55, so called because his anonymous writings came down to us in the same volume as those of his predecessor Isaiah of Jerusalem, had pondered long and deeply upon the mysteries of the situation, until at length light broke upon the problem, and God's Spirit led him to the truth. He is convinced that the exile is not God's last word, nor the memorial of an exploded faith.

Jeremiah had foretold the exile to an unbelieving people, and when the blow fell, in the face of similar unbelief he assured the nation that they would one day return. Israel was God's servant and the nation was immortal until its work was done (Jeremiah 30^{10}, cf. Ezek. 37^{20-28}). And Jeremiah too believed that all men were destined to turn to Jehovah and realize that they were His children (Jer. 12^{15-16}, 16^{19-20}).*

Whether he took them from Jeremiah or not, Deutero-Isaiah found his gospel in the combination of these two ideas. God loves the Gentiles and would have them brought to the knowledge of the truth. The truth about God Israel alone knows; and so Israel is to be His messenger to the world. As God had sent prophets to Israel, so He sends Israel to the world. "There is no God but Jehovah, and Israel is His prophet" (Wellhausen).

It is a commonplace of the Old Testament that Israel is the chosen people of Jehovah (Deut. 7^{6}, 14^{2}). The nation

* In spite of such passages the universal message of the religion of Jehovah is not a feature of Jeremiah's teaching. None the less in his doctrine of the New Covenant (Jer. 31^{31-34}), his greatest contribution to religious thought, he really proclaimed a religion that was independent of race and country. He thought of the New Covenant as made with Israel and Judah, like the old one, but he shifted the emphasis from the nation to the individual. Until his time religion was primarily a relation between the nation and its God, between Israel and Jehovah, and the individual had no direct relation to God independent of his nationality. When Jeremiah proclaimed that each man might know God for himself, he transformed the whole conception of religion, and logically implied its universality. (See Peake, *Jeremiah,* Vol. I. pp. 43 ff.).

had had many proofs of God's special favor. They never ceased to proclaim that Jehovah had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. But to some even of the prophets this choice meant that Israel was Jehovah's spoilt child dowered with the best that He could give for her own sake. But Deutero-Isaiah saw that Israel was chosen not as God's favorite—He loved all nations—but as His servant, chosen not in opposition to other nations but for their sakes. Israel had been chosen *because* God loved the world. As Israel had been marvelously redeemed from Egypt, so not less marvelously was it to be redeemed from Babylon by means of Cyrus, God's chosen instrument. And by this deliverance it was to be enabled as a servant nation to win the world for God (Isaiah 45^{1-6}). In this great missionary purpose of God, Deutero-Isaiah found the explanation not only of Israel's favor but also for her otherwise inexplicable suffering. Even the exile with its pain was part of God's plan. Israel's suffering was vicarious. It was more than punishment for her sin: it was to be a means of redemption for the world.*

Whilst this message is interwoven with all his prophecy, it is in the so-called Servant Songs embedded in the book that Deutero-Isaiah's gospel is most clearly expressed. Read consecutively they seem to present a logical development of thought, culminating in what is perhaps the profoundest passage in Old Testament writings, the inner meanings of which can be understood only in the light of Christ.

In the first of these Songs (Isa. 42^{1-4}) Jehovah is the speaker. Israel is His servant chosen to instruct the nations in the divine law. By his gentleness and patience he will convert the world.

In the second Song (49^{1-6}) the servant tells his own story

* It is interesting to note the deep impression made by the missionary message of Deutero-Isaiah upon William Carey, and how often he turned to this book for encouragement and argument. See *Life* by S. Pearce Carey.

to the nations. Chosen from birth as a divine instrument and prepared for his task, he long remained unused like an arrow in the quiver. When he first sought to carry out his task, failure and discouragement were his lot. But divine reassurance came to him. Not only is Israel to be restored, but the servant is to be "a light to the Gentiles," Jehovah's messenger of "salvation unto the end of the earth."

In the third song (50^{4-9}) the servant is still the speaker. In order that he might have a message for the nations he was carefully taught by Jehovah. But the proclamation of the message brought him persecution.

The fourth and last of the Songs (Isa. 52^{13}-53^{12}) gathers up the ideas of the other three. The prophet becomes a martyr, but in the end his sufferings shall be crowned with glory. The song begins with a passage in which Jehovah describes the confusion of the nations when they realize the true worth and nature of the servant whom they have despised (52^{13-15}). A chorus of the nations follows. "Who could have believed that which has been told us?" they cry in amazement. Cut off from Palestine, Israel had grown up like a sapling in the barren ground of Babylon, weak and unattractive. The nations had shrunk from him as from a leper. They treated him with contempt and oppression. Yet, as they now recognized, he was suffering on their behalf, and in accordance with Jehovah's plan, though they had thought his suffering a mark of divine displeasure. And Jehovah (vv. 11-12) vindicates His servant. Israel is thus the divinely commissioned prophet and martyr whose words and examples will in the end convert the nations, winning his triumph not by force of arms but by the compelling power of suffering love.

It is a moving and impressive picture, but even as we read we cannot fail to be impressed with the contrast between the picture and the reality. Did the nation ever accept this great destiny? Have her sufferings redeemed the world? The prophet himself was not unmindful of these questions. As

we have seen, the exile called forth an Israel within Israel. There was an Israel after the flesh and an Israel after the spirit, as there was in Paul's day. Though called to be God's servant, the nation as a whole had been blind and deaf to the call (42[19-20]). Yet among them there were eyes and ears (43[8]). So from the actual but imperfect Israel the prophet rose to the conception of an ideal Israel true to its calling, faithful in spite of opposition and persecution. In the second Song the servant, though addressed as Israel (49[3]), is yet distinguished from the nation as a whole. It is to be part of his task to raise up his own nation (49[6]).*

To that ideal Israel the Gentile world does owe much of its knowledge of God. From it came the inexhaustible treasures of the Old Testament. Of that Israel are the prophets and psalmists who prepared the way of the Lord, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9[5]). In that Israel Jesus found His first disciples: Peter and John and the rest. The translation of the Old Testament into Greek, known as the Septuagint, was done for the benefit of the Jews themselves, many of whom, scattered abroad, had forgotten Hebrew and Aramaic. Greek had become their mother-tongue. But it also proved to be the first missionary translation of the Bible, making it available for all Greek-speaking peoples. The synagogue opened to non-Jews and the Septuagint brought many Greeks to worship the God of the Jews. It was among these Jewish synagogues and the God-fearing Gentiles throughout the Roman world who had found light and help in the knowledge of Israel's God, that the Christian Church found its

* Prof. McFadyen holds that the words, "that thou shouldest be my servant," are an interpolation, and that the original text ran, "It is too light a thing (*i. e.* for me, Jehovah) to raise up the tribes of Israel." Jehovah is not a God with merely national interests, He is the world God, whose purpose is the redemption of the world. See *Isaiah in Modern Speech*, pp. 149, 215. If this is so, my main argument is, of course, all the stronger.

earliest members. Paul was an Israelite. "Salvation," said Jesus, "is of the Jews."

Yet when Deutero-Isaiah rose to the height of his great argument he soared far beyond the achievement and capacity of any ideal nation, though he had indeed divined the inner meaning of her place in world history. Moved by the divine Spirit to a profound insight into God's ways and purposes, he wrote far more than he knew, foreshadowing the Cross that was to be erected once in time as the revelation of the inmost heart of God. He had no Jesus of Nazareth in mind when he penned the fifty-third chapter, and many of its details are inapplicable to Him. And yet it is only in Jesus that it found its fulfillment. The ideal Israel in whom the prophet's picture came true was Jesus Christ. Sinless as Israel was not, He bore the burden of the world's sin and by His suffering and death reconciled the world to God.

The New Testament has many echoes of that chapter. Our Lord saw there set forth God's method of redemption, which He was to follow. "When Jesus read the Old Testament, which was His Bible, He found in it many pictures of the Messiah; of one who is to rule the nations with a sceptre of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2^{9}); one who is to gird his sword on his thigh, and in his majesty ride prosperously (Ps. 45^{3-4}); one who is to strike through the head in many lands and be exalted (Ps. 110^{6-7}). There is no clear evidence that any of these pictures awakened in Him a sense of self-recognition. But there is the strongest evidence that in three other pictures: (*a*) Isa. 61^{1-2} quoted in Luke 4^{18-19}; (*b*) Zech. 9^{9}, quoted in Mark 11^{9-10} and Matt. 21^{5}; (*c*) Isaiah 53; He saw and knew Himself, and of these the most amazing likeness is the third, which no one had ever dreamed of calling Messianic....To Him the ideal of vicarious suffering to be endured in holy love, of atoning sacrifice to be offered unto God in lowly obediance, for the redemption of all the nations, expressed the whole meaning of His incarnation and life so clearly to

Himself that He wondered any one should fail to see it. 'O foolish men, and slow of heart,' He said, 'to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' (Luke 24^{25-26})."* Taught by Him, the early Church was quick to trace the likeness of her crucified and risen Lord to the portrait of the suffering servant. In Him the dream had become a reality and the purpose of God was embodied in flesh and blood.

None the less it is still an unfulfilled program that the prophet proclaimed. Not yet has Jesus seen of the travail of His soul and been satisfied. Not yet have all the ends of the earth turned to Him to be saved. The Christian Church is heir to that program of suffering service. "As the Father sent me into the world, even so send I you," said Jesus. It is our glorious vocation to be a light to the nations and to carry the gospel of God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

* Strahan, *God in History,* pp. 233-5.

CHAPTER III

JONAH: THE STORY OF A MISSIONARY

THE experiences of the Jews during the exile in Babylon not unnaturally left bitterness behind them. To be a suffering servant of the world was not a congenial rôle to the nation. A poor, despised, insulted people was not in a mood to listen to talk of international brotherhood and service. Other voices than that of Deutero-Isaiah were raised, and other views of national destiny proclaimed. It is a thankless task to dwell upon the less noble expressions of Jewish religion at this time, but at least their existence must be remembered if the situation is to be understood. If we are tempted to harsh and unsympathetic judgment, let us call to mind some of the things that were said in Christian England and even in Christian pulpits during the war.

The deeply moving opening of the 137th Psalm quickens the imagination to appreciate the feelings of the Jewish captives, homesick and heartbroken, with memories of the descent of the invading Babylonian army. One shudders at the harshness of his bitter curse, but only those who have stood where the Psalmist stood can pronounce judgment upon him. So too there is little doubt that the race hatred in which the Book of Esther is soaked was inspired by the sufferings of exile. If its butchery of Israel's enemies is fortunately unhistorical, yet it is no doubt the embodiment of the writer's wish. The romance and glamour of the story must not blind us to the great gulf which separates its out-

look from any that should be possible for the Christian. Isaiah 34, with its terrible picture of destruction, also probably belongs to the time of the return from the exile. Edom in particular is singled out as the object of Jehovah's vengeance. The Edomites were never forgiven for their cruelty when Jerusalem was destroyed (cf. Ps. 137^{7}). Compared with such an attitude Nehemiah's narrow nationalism in rejecting the proffered friendship of the half-Jewish Samaritans and in his expulsion of the foreign wives, seems almost mild (Ezra 4^{1-5}, Neh. 13^{23-31}).

About 400 B.C. was probably the date of Joel's outburst of wrath upon the enemies of Judah, when he calls upon his people to beat their ploughshares into swords and their pruning-hooks into spears that they may play their part in the judgment of Jehovah (3^{10}). Somewhat later, probably, but rivaling Joel in his pictures of bloodthirsty vengeance, is the writer of chapters 9 to 14 of Zechariah.

But amid all this orgy of hatred there was one man at least who had learned of God a better way. Just as when Christendom was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Turk, and pouring out her blood and treasure in the tragic and barbarous Crusades, there was one man who dared to believe in the power of love—Raymond Lull. "I see many knights," he wrote, "going to the Holy Land beyond the seas and thinking that they can acquire it by force of arms; but in the end all are destroyed before they attain that which they think to have. Whence it seems to me that the conquest of the Holy Land ought not to be attempted except in the way in which Thou and Thine Apostles acquired it, namely, by love and prayers and the pouring out of tears and blood." And what he preached he strove to do in one of the most heroic lives our world has seen.*

* Lull gave his life to the conversion of Islam, and is unique in his age. But he was inspired to this decision by the story told him by a Franciscan monk of the amazing journey taken by Francis of Assisi. In 1219, in the very midst of the Crusades, Francis left his work in Italy, journeyed to Egypt, and there succeeded, by letting

So, like a pre-Christian Raymond Lull, does the unknown author of the Book of Jonah tower above his contemporaries. And the tragedy of it is that to most people it is just "a book about a whale." Yet this brief pamphlet is in many ways the culmination of Old Testament revelation. It is an express protest against the bitterness and narrow nationalism of current Judaism. "God has granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life" is its text. God loves the enemies of Israel—even their very cattle! (4^{11}). The story is an allegory, and is set in the Old Testament among the prophets, not among the historical books. Jonah was an obscure prophet who lived in the reign of Jeroboam and preached the extension of the bounds of the national territory (2 Kings 14^{25})—a jingo we might call him to-day. The author uses him in his parable as typical of Israel with her reluctance to carry out her missionary vocation.

Jonah is summoned by Jehovah to preach to Nineveh. Nineveh! As well ask a Belgian to go on an evangelistic mission to Berlin! Suppose they were to listen to his message and repent and be forgiven instead of meeting their just retribution (Jonah 4^{2}). Jonah would have nothing to do with such a task. He rose up to flee away to Spain "from the presence of the Lord"—out of the reach as he thought, of the God of Israel.

But down from the hills where Jonah thought he had left his God, there swept a great storm, which fell upon the little vessel where he slept in fancied security. And the lot

himself be taken prisoner, in penetrating to the presence of the Sultan of Egypt, to whom he preached Christ. The Sultan sent him back to the crusading army. Sabatier quotes a saying which illustrates the missionary fervor of Francis, and his belief in seeking to win the hearts of Moslems when the Church of his day offered them only the sword: "Do you think that God raised up the Brothers for the sake of this country alone? Verily I say unto you, God has raised them up for the awakening and the salvation of all men, and they shall win souls not only in the countries of those who believe, but also in the very midst of infidels" (*St. Francis of Assisi,* p. 209).

SCHOOL OF

revealed that it was because of him that the tempest threatened to overwhelm them. Then Jonah knew that even on the sea he still stood in the presence of Jehovah, and he offered to sacrifice himself that the others might be saved. "Take me up," he said, "and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." But the sailors, heathen though they were, were of finer stuff than that. Not till all other hope was gone would they consent to such a course, and they redoubled their efforts to reach the land in safety. Jonah learned his first lesson about the heathen he despised as he saw them thus striving at the oars to save him from death.* Something even more astonishing happened. The sailors prayed to the God of Israel of whom the prophet had told them—the very thing he was fleeing to avoid!

The sailors' generous struggle proved in vain. The storm increased in violence, so that at last they took up Jonah and cast him into the sea. "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

The prophets frequently represented the heathen tyrants of Israel as sea monsters, and Jeremiah actually describes the exile of the nation as a swallowing by a dragon whom God forces at last to disgorge its living prey (Jer. $51^{34,44}$). So here a similar image is employed. Upon Israel's flight from the divine will there followed the exile in Babylon.

After the Exile came the renewed call to service. "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time." The task had still to be performed. This time the prophet obeyed. Through the mighty city with its teeming multitudes he went with a message of divine wrath. One wonders if that was all God meant him to preach. Perhaps he colored his message by his own desires. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

His prophecy was never fulfilled. A marvelous and dra-

* Compare how Jesus used the despised Samaritan in His parable to teach the lesson of love and service.

matic repentance swept through the city, and won the divine forgiveness. Like the elder brother in that other parable, Jonah was angry. Why should God forgive these tyrannical enemies of his country? "Was not this just what I said would happen? It was for this very reason that I fled to Spain. I knew that Thou wert a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." In high dudgeon he left the city and sat down to watch it from a distance. Perhaps it might be destroyed after all!

There he sat beneath the broad leaves of a gourdvine. It was very comfortable in its pleasant shade and he was "exceedingly glad" of that, though he was angry at God's goodness to other men. But his joy was short-lived. The gourd withered and the hot sun beat down upon him, and again he was very angry, moved with pity at its untimely destruction.

"Then said the Lord, *thou* hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night: and should not *I* spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand (*i. e.* children); and also much cattle."

It is an abrupt end, but indeed what more needs to be said? The lesson is plain. Yet in a sense the Book of Jonah breaks off in the middle of a verse. It proclaims, "God so loved the world." The rest had to wait for a later age.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORLD OUTLOOK OF JESUS

THE Apostle Paul speaks of "the eternal purpose" of God in accordance with which he had been called "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3^{8-11}). The missionary work of the early Church was no afterthought, no later unauthorized addition to the simple Galilean Gospel, conceived in Paul's fertile brain. It was part of a plan that had its beginning before the creation of the world. The plan arose in the missionary heart of God. It lay behind His choice of Israel to be His chosen people—chosen not for privilege or selfish aggrandizement, but that they might be a missionary nation, a light of the Gentiles, the herald of the universal love of God. History has no more thrilling story than that which tells of the widening horizon of Israel's faith. Arising in a world where every nation had its own God, and believing itself that Jehovah was but its own national God, Israel as we have seen, came to believe in one God who made the earth and the heavens and who was Lord of all the nations, bringing up the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir, no less than Israel out of Egypt, and loving the Ethiopian as He loved the Jew. The prophets of Israel whom God raised up to proclaim this truth and to call the nation to its missionary vocation are a unique phenomenon in the world's religious history. The Old Testament is saturated with a universal outlook to which

there is no parallel in ancient literature, and which had no fellow till the New Testament stood beside it.

To the range of vision of the New Testament there are no limits. It looks back into the days before the world was, and it looks forward to the new heavens and the new earth. It is an imperial book, claiming the whole world for its Lord and brooking no rival. John's Gospel traces back the incarnation to a missionary impulse in the divine heart. In Jesus, God Himself came to the world that He had made. Luke puts at the outset of his story the picture of the old man Simeon hailing in the babe Jesus the fulfilment of the universalism of Isaiah of Babylon—the "salvation prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2^{30-32}). While Matthew, most Jewish of the evangelists though he is, tells how the wise men from the East came to worship the newborn King.

But indeed the New Testament is itself the product of the missionary work of the early Christians, and was written primarily to meet the needs of that work. The Gospels were written because the far-flung battle line of the early Church made it impossible to rely any longer on the verbal accounts of witnesses. The letters of the New Testament are one and all the letters of missionaries * to mission stations, and they bear the stamp of men whose lives were dominated by the purpose of carrying the good news of Christ to every corner of the world. The book of the Acts is, of course, just the first chapter in the many-volumed story of Christian missions.

We must not forget how marvelous such a missionary movement was. We have seen earlier how the Old Testament is saturated with a world outlook. But in spite of the universalism of the Old Testament the Jews in the time of Jesus were exclusive and self-centered, distinguished as a

* The original meaning of the word "apostle," Greek *apostolos*, was just "missionary."

people by their contempt for all who were not of the seed of Abraham, and brooding upon revengeful hopes of national greatness. It is true that they had spread over the world, and the Hellenistic Jews were wider in sympathy and had attracted not a few Gentiles to their faith. But it was not so with the Jew of Jerusalem and Judea. His religious leaders were concerned with the minutiæ of ritual and the casuistries of a narrow legalism. They fed on the husk and left the kernel of the Old Testament untouched. This missionary zeal of the prophets was gone. In its stead was an arid spirit of proselytism, seeking converts for its own petty dogmas, and not caring to carry to men the streams of the river of the waters of life. This proselytism was a kind of spiritual imperialism. The Jews would not have other nations as equal partners in God's commonwealth. They could enter only as naturalized aliens—never as children in their own right—by adopting all the peculiar rites and customs with which the Jewish religion had been overlaid. (See Matt. 23^{15}; cf. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for To-day*, p. 44).

The temper of Jewish nationalism at its narrowest may be judged from a sentence from 2 Esdras 6^{55-56}, written in all probability toward the end of the first century of our era. "Thou hast said that for our sakes" (*i. e.* for Jews) "Thou madest this world. As for the other nations, which also come of Adam, Thou hast said that they are nothing and are like unto spittle: and Thou hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel."
"Amongst themselves," wrote Tacitus, "they keep faith inviolable and are always ready to help one another. They hate all the rest of the world as enemies."*

It is true that the Jewish writings of the period between the Old and the New Testaments contain passages which reflect the universalism of the prophets, yet many parallels to this extract from Esdras might be quoted. Of *The Testa-*

* *Hist.* V. 5.

ments of the Twelve Patriarchs, written probably between 109 and 106 B.C., Dr. Charles says, "The salvation of the Gentiles belongs to the very texture of this book."* But the harsher view became prevalent in the first century before Christ, and is almost universal in the writings of later Judaism.

Mr. Montefiore, the distinguished Jewish scholar, has often complained of the unfair judgment passed by Christians upon the Judaism of New Testament times. It is fitting, therefore, that he should be called as a witness here. He speaks concerning Rabbinic Judaism of its "indifference, dislike, contempt, particularizing in this ready and not unwilling consignment of the non-believer and the non-Jew to perdition and gloom" (*Judaism and Paul,* p. 56). Jesus, he says, "brought about the diffusion and universalization of some fundamental tenets of Judaism....Though in their highest moments the Rabbinic authorities might say that Abraham was the father of the proselyte quite as much as he was the ancestor of the born Jew, yet as a matter of fact the transfer of Judaism to the Gentile upon any large and adequate scale was beset with difficulties....The significance of Jesus for his age lies, then, in the fact that by certain elements in his teaching and by certain qualities in his personality he enabled these barriers of law and nationality to be broken down" (*Hibbert Journal,* July 1912, pp. 767,772, 773).

Jesus, then, was not merely emphasizing already recognized truths or echoing the teachings of Judaism, when He proclaimed the love of God for the world and declared that they should come from the East and the West to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. This was something new to His generation. His proclamation of God's care for the alien in the synagogue at Nazareth at the outset of His mission roused the fury of His hearers (Luke 4^{16-30}).

* *Testament of Twelve Patriarchs.* Note on *Testament of Benjamin,* 9^{2}.

Jesus disentangled religion from its national setting. His appeal was as wide as humanity. Is it not one of the lessons of the story of the Temptation—His own parabolic telling of His inner conflict—that the desire to be king of all the earth, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, was set in His heart? He turned from the way of worldly empire only that He might achieve His desire more surely in another way.

We need not go to isolated "proof texts" to be convinced of His world outlook. The whole basis of His teaching was implicitly universal. His message about the nature of God's Kingdom and the conditions of entrance contains nothing which makes it characteristically Jewish. The Beatitudes say nothing about racial qualifications, and the Lord's Prayer voices the needs of humanity. The love of God and the love of man were to Him the sum of the commandments. The assertion of the Fatherhood of God and of the infinite value of every human soul demand international brotherhood as their essential outcome. Religion to Him is primarily a relation between Father and child. What He emphasizes as fundamental depends on no national considerations. "Whosoever" is a characteristic gospel word. There is nothing national in the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. Indeed the latter story explicitly sets the claim of human need above the prejudices of creed and nationality. And what He taught in parable He lived in deed, as, for example, in His whole attitude to the Samaritans so strikingly different from that of His nation.

It is worth while to dwell for a moment upon the relations of Jesus with the Samaritans, as a signal instance of His challenge to the narrow nationalism of His own people. The antipathy between Samaritan and Jew (cf. John 4^9) had its roots far back in history. The Samaritans sprang from Assyrian colonists (2 Kings 17^{24}) who were settled in Palestine at the time of the Exile, and intermarried with Israelites who were left. They learned the religion of Israel from

priests sent by the Assyrian king to teach them. At the time of the Return the Samaritans offered to help in the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel, but their offer was rejected. The Samaritans never forgave the Jews for this slight. They set up a rival temple and priesthood on Mount Gerizim, and the breach became irrevocable. The hatred between the two peoples often led to actual war. Two sayings of Jewish rabbis may be quoted in illustration of the situation. "He who eats the bread of a Samaritan is as one who eats swine's flesh."* "No Samaritan shall ever be made a proselyte. They have no share in the resurrection of the dead." † This atmosphere of bitterness must be remembered if the attitude of Jesus is to be properly appreciated.

Both the bitterness and His contrasting spirit may be seen in the story of the journey of Jesus and His disciples through Samaria. They were refused hospitality in a Samaritan village because they were pilgrims to Jerusalem. James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy the village, but Jesus rebuked them, and they "passed on to another village" (Luke 9^{51-56}). On another occasion Jesus accepted water from a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and entered into conversation with her. He spent two days in her Samaritan village. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus ennobled the name that till His time was almost a synonym for devil (John 8^{48}). Jesus not only takes a Samaritan before a Jewish audience as an example of generosity and neighborliness, but he also puts a priest and a Levite as contrasts. A modern parallel would be a speaker who told the story to an Orange audience in Belfast with a Roman Catholic Sinn Feiner as hero and a Presbyterian minister and an elder in the place of priest and Levite. It is worth noting, perhaps, that Jesus told this story soon after His hostile reception in the Samaritan village. On another

* *Mishnah Shebiith,* VIII. 10. † *Pirke Rabbi Elieser,* 38.

occasion He called special attention to the gratitude shown by a Samaritan leper (Luke 17[16-18]).

The readiness of Jesus to welcome response to His message in any quarter and His brushing aside of national barriers is also strikingly illustrated in the incident of the centurion. This Roman army captain—one of a class whom the Jews had no cause to love—came to Him seeking help for a sick slave, but he declared that Jesus need not come to where the servant lay. It would be enough if He only spoke the healing word. "I tell you truly," exclaimed Jesus to His followers, "I have never met faith like this anywhere in Israel. Many, I tell you, will come from East and West and take their places beside Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Realm of Heaven, while the sons of the Realm will pass outside into the darkness" (Matt. 8[5-13], Moffatt; cf. Matt. 21 [43]). It was not Jewish birth that qualified for the Kingdom of God.

When religion is thus carried down to its deepest center the separating limits of nationality fall away as meaningless. If Jesus nowhere in so many words repudiates the distinction between Jew and Gentile, as Paul did later, yet His whole life and teaching undermined it. What is purely human can no longer be the privilege of one nation above others. It is for the whole of mankind.

If one examines the Gospels in detail for evidence of a world outlook, the mass of material is embarrassing. Pages of references to passages and verses might be given. If this sounds an overstatement the reader is invited to make his own list by a careful re-reading of the Gospels from this point of view. No attempt at such a catalogue is here made, but it is worth while to draw attention to some of the more striking incidents and sayings.

It should not be forgotten that there is a universalism in the very audiences to which the Gospels are addressed. The superscription on the Cross was written "in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew" (Luke 23[38]). Each of those peoples

has a Gospel addressed to it. Matthew's Gospel is intended for Jews. Its great purpose throughout is to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah. His genealogy is traced back to Abraham. It is recorded that Jesus did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt. 5^{17}). There are continual references to the Old Testament. Mark's Gospel was written probably at Rome. It carefully explains all Jewish and Palestinian references which would be unintelligible to a foreigner, and there are few Old Testament quotations. It contains a number of Latin words. It emphasizes the aspects of the life of Jesus which would be most attractive to the Roman mentality, His practical activity and deeds. "He went about going good" might be its motto. Luke's Gospel is for the Greek. Its author was himself a Greek doctor, the only Gentile among the New Testament writers. As we shall see shortly, its world outlook is one of the outstanding characteristics of his book.

Apart from the fact already discussed that the teaching of Jesus is in its very nature universal in its appeal, each Gospel has incidental references—all the more impressive perhaps because merely incidental—to the world outlook of Jesus. Even the first Gospel, definitely addressed to Jews as it is, is not without these. For example, Matthew alone records in the Sermon on the Mount the words "Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world" (5^{13-14}). When our Lord followed this saying by, "A city set on a hill cannot be hid," one wonders if He thought of Isaiah's great missionary dream of the nations flocking to Zion (Isa. 2^{2-4}). Professor Findlay's paraphrase of Matt. 5^{43-45} is very suggestive: "You have heard the words of Scripture; 'love your fellow-countrymen' and know the conclusion your teachers draw; 'Of course this means that you are to hate all foreigners.' I tell you, you must love those whom you have learnt to think of as your enemies, and if they treat you badly, must pray for them. So shall you really be like God your Father; you know He makes His sun shine down

on bad and good alike, and sends His rain on all men, whether they obey or disobey His will."* Matthew alone tells us that Jesus said "The field is the world" (13[38]). Only the first Gospel records the parable of the Judgment, when before the Son of Man are to gathered "all the nations"† (Matt. 25[32]). It tells us that the Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached "in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations" (Matt. 24[14]; cf. Mark 13[10]). It shares with Mark the wonderful saying of Jesus about the woman who anointed His feet in Simon's house, a saying which clearly assumes that there will be a world-wide missionary enterprise after His death. "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Matt. 26[13], Mark 14[9]).

Mark's Gospel, as scholarship has clearly established, was the source from which Matthew and Luke drew a great part of their Gospels, though each of them supplemented it with material of their own from other sources. Mark's account of the Baptism records that the divine voice used words recalling the Second Psalm (1[11]), which contains the verse, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2[8]). There may be a reference also in the words "in thee I am well pleased" to Isaiah 42[1]. If so, the Baptism is still more clearly marked as a setting apart to a mission of world-wide meaning. In Mark's account of the cleansing of the Temple (11[15-17]), he alone completes the quotation from Isaiah 56[7]. "My house shall be called a house of prayer *for all the nations*," especially appropriate since it was the court of the Gentiles that Jesus cleared. Dr. Oesterley‡ argues that the cleansing of the Temple shows

* *The Realism of Jesus*, p. 16.

† The Greek word translated "nations" is the same word as is translated "Gentiles"—the non-Jewish peoples.

‡ *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, II. pp. 712-13.

a definite intention on the part of Jesus to abrogate the entire Jewish sacrificial system. If so, this would be a further step to the foundation of a universal religion. Again, the cry of desolation from the Cross (Mark 15^{34}) is the opening verse of a Psalm (22) which ends in triumph: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the Kingdom is the Lord's: And He is the governor among the nations."

But Luke's is preëminently the Gospel of the universal mission of Jesus. Whereas Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus to Abraham, Luke carries it back to Adam (3^{38}), so claiming Him for the whole human race. And that is typical of the whole Gospel. Luke sees Christianity not as a Jewish sect but as a universal religion, a factor in the life of the world. Himself a Gentile, he dedicates his book to a Gentile of rank in the Roman world. There are many friendly references to Rome in his writing, and he is the only New Testament writer to mention a Roman emperor by name.

Writing for Gentile readers he is careful, like Mark, to avoid Hebrew terms. In his account of the transfiguration he avoids the word "metamorphosed," which was used by Mark and Matthew, because of its mythological associations for Greek readers. He adds the adjective "unclean" to the word demon (4^{36}), as Gentiles believed in good as well as bad demons. He explains (20^{27}) that Sadducees are "they who say there is no resurrection." He omits teaching about the Jewish law, which would have little interest to Gentiles.

Though a Gentile and writing for fellow Gentiles, Luke has no antagonism to Jews. He shows indeed a marked sympathy with the little circle of old-fashioned Jews into whose midst Jesus comes. His early chapters are largely couched in the language of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. Yet his chief interest is to prove that the gospel is not only "the glory of His people Israel" but also "a light to lighten the Gentiles." He sets his story in the framework of

world history (3^{1}). He continues the quotation from Isaiah 40 so as to include the words, ommitted by Mark and Matthew, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (3^{6}). Luke alone records the words at Nazareth about the relations of Elijah and Elisha with the heathen—"a foreign missionary address from the lips of Jesus Himself." In his account of the coming to Jesus of the Roman centurion he emphasizes the broad-minded character of the man, and his friendship with the Jews (7^{3-5}). The sign of the Son of Man is a sign like that of Jonah—the conversion of Gentiles through the preaching of a Jew (11^{29-32}). Most of the information regarding the relations between Jesus and the Samaritans, referred to above, is found only in Luke's Gospel. To miss Luke's emphasis on the universal meaning of Jesus is to miss one of the most characteristic features of this Gospel.

The Fourth Gospel is a different type of book from the first three. It is more a meditation on the life of our Lord than a biography. Not that it is unhistorical. Indeed on certain questions of fact it supplements and even corrects the Synoptics. On the whole, however, the writer seems to take them for granted, and looking back over the story of Christ he reads into it the reflections of a lifetime of thought and discipleship. If his aim can be said to be the bringing out of the inner and spiritual meaning of the gospel, one element he stresses is undoubtedly its universalism. This is one of the dominant features of his work. There is nothing nationalistic about his conception of Christianity, from the Prologue with its cosmic background, setting everything in relation to Christ, to the "magnificent hyperbole" of the last verse of all. The two often-quoted verses might stand as the motto of the book: "God so loved *the world,* that he gave his only-begotten son, that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (3^{16-17} R. V.).

We have emphasized earlier in this chapter the fact that Christianity is universal in the heart of its message, meeting the needs of common humanity. Nowhere is this more clearly stated than in the Fourth Gospel. It presents Jesus as offering men Shelter, Food and Drink, Light—and Life itself; Life and the means of Life. "I am the Door" (10^{9}), "I am the Light of the World" (8^{12}; cf. 1^{9} (is there a reference here to Isa. 49^{6}?), 9^{5}, 12^{46}). "I am the Bread of Life" (6^{35}; cf. 6^{51}). He offers "living Water" (4^{10}, 7^{37}). "I am ...the Life" (11^{25}; cf. 14^{6}). Whoever knows what it is to be outside, to be in the dark, to be hungry or thirsty, to long for vigor and life, may come to Jesus, and coming find His needs met.

These gifts are for all men, not alone for those to whom He offered them in person in the days of His flesh. There were other sheep not of the fold of Judaism to be brought into the one flock (10^{16}). "Neither for those only do I pray but for them also that shall believe on me through their word, that they may all be one" ($17^{20\text{-}21}$). "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (12^{32}). In His talk with the Samaritan woman He brushes away all national barriers to worship; henceforth it shall be neither in Mount Gerizim nor at Jerusalem but "in spirit and truth" ($4^{21\text{-}24}$). And in the Greeks who come to seek Him He heralds the first-fruits of a mighty harvest ($12^{20\text{-}24}$; see also page 55). When He died it was not only for His own nation, "but that he might also gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad" (11^{52}).

All the Gospels thus witness unmistakably to the world outlook of Jesus.

It is true, however, that there are one or two sayings in the Gospels in which He appears to disclaim all thoughts of a world-wide mission. Great play has been made by the opponents of missions with His commission to the twelve when He first sent them out (Matt. 10^{5}ff), and with the story of the Syro-Phenician woman (Matt. 15^{21}ff., Mark

7^{24}ff.). But we may be well content that the world outlook of Christ should be judged by these passages. For these very restrictions convey a very different lesson from that which they superficially bear.

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles," He said to the twelve. But why did He say "go not" if the idea of so going was not in His mind or theirs? The warning is meaningless otherwise. No Jew in Palestine in Christ's day would have planned a mission to Gentile dogs and half-heathen Samaritans. If the disciples thought of such a mission—as the words suggest—it was from Jesus that they learned so daring a thought. At the least the saying reveals His own mind. The limitation was temporary and with a view to later wider developments. "Give me a fulcrum for my lever and I will move the world." Jesus was seeking His fulcrum in the Jewish nation.*

So Mark tells us that Jesus said to the Syro-Phenician woman, "Let the children *first* be filled." And in any case it is not impossible that what Jesus really said was "I am not sent but to such sheep lost from the house of Israel"—as an old Syriac version reads.† Indeed, if these were not the words on His lips, may we not dare to say that that was the thought in His heart? Does not the incident as a whole show us that Jesus was glad to have His usual and necessary policy broken in upon, pleased that the woman would not take "no" for an answer?

Undoubtedly it was His deliberate policy to restrict His own work to the Jews. But the limitation was only a means to an end. John's Gospel records that when the Greeks came seeking Jesus, He was deeply moved. A corn of wheat, He said, unless it is to abide alone must be sown in some field that it may germinate. But dying there it will bring forth fruit that can be sown wider and wider till the whole

* I am indebted here to a valuable article by Dr. George Jackson, "The Missionary Idea in the Gospels" (*Expository Times*, Vol. XXIII. p. 54). † So Findlay, *Realism of Jesus*, p. 111.

world is waving with harvests that spring from the single seed. The cross set up outside Jerusalem's city wall is to win the world (John 12^{20-33}). That is His answer to the Greeks.

The missionary enterprise was not an afterthought of the resurrection. But the universal commission comes after it because it belongs there. The limitations are no longer necessary. Henceforth the disciples *are* to go into the way of the Gentiles.

Here criticism raises problems. Did Jesus really utter the Great Commission? The end of Mark's Gospel, we know, is a later addition, and grave difficulties are raised by the phraseology of the version in Matthew. We need not contend for verbal accuracy. There are slight discrepancies between the different versions in any case. But the Commission is found in some form in each of the first three Gospels and the Book of Acts. The examination of these suggests that the divergence of form may not be due entirely to independent accounts of the same saying, but perhaps to its repetition by Jesus in various forms on different occasions. In either case the impression is strong that the dominating theme of the risen Christ was the commission to preach the gospel. "The *fact* of a great charge, the general import of which was thoroughly understood, seems indisputable."* That there was such a commission is the most reasonable explanation of the missionary activity of the early Church. It has indeed been argued that the commission could not be genuine because of the flagrant disobedience of it by the disciples. But did they disobey? The great dispute in the early Church was not about the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, but about the conditions on which they were to receive salvation and be admitted to the Church. Peter never argued that Jesus told them to confine themselves to the Jews. Peter's first recorded utterance after the resurrection is meaningless unless he was conscious of the uni-

* Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 68.

versal mission of the church (Acts 2^{17}). And his later speeches at that time but confirm it (3^{25}, 4^{12}). "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The disciples did preach Christ in Jerusalem and Judea and even to the Samaritans, toward whom there was as strong an antipathy as to the Gentiles. Surely one of the most moving verses in the New Testament is that which reads, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8^{5}). It would have been easier for a Jew to preach to Greeks than to Samaritans. And in a very few years after the crucifixion—Harnack says one year, and the longest estimate says six or seven*—the Church had got such a hold on Damascus that the Sanhedrin sent Paul to root them out. There is not much "flagrant disobedience" here.

But we need not be too greatly concerned for the authenticity of the Great Commission. The missionary case does not rest on that. As Dr. Glover says: "If modern criticism is right in detaching the 'missionary commission' from the words of Jesus, the fact remains that the early Christians were 'going out into all the world' and 'preaching the Gospel to every creature' for half a century before the words were written. Why? 'He that has the words of Jesus truly can here his silence,' said Ignatius; and if Jesus did not speak these words, men heard his silence to the same effect."†

Harnack, who bluntly says "Jesus never gave such a commandment," allows that the missionary work of the apostles was the necessary development of truths uttered by Jesus, and that the record of these commands is "ideally considered, true....It was the spirit of Jesus—so they felt—which impelled the disciples to undertake a mission to the world."‡

* Turner; Ramsay 3; Lightfoot 4.

† *Conflict of Religions,* p. 161.

‡ *Expansion of Christianity in first three Centuries.* A. B. Bruce (*Apologetics,* p. 463) holds that the Commission in Matthew is not

If there were no world outlook in the Old Testament, no universal commission among the sayings of Jesus, no attempt by the apostles to win the world, yet we should still be bound to be missionary. Our whole faith demands it. We are committed to the missionary enterprise by the very nature of the gospel. The love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind, and it is the love of God that is the ultimate ground of missions, their reason and their inspiration. Jesus is too great a Savior for anything less than the whole race.

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so much "a report of what the risen Jesus said to His disciples at a given time and place, as rather a summary of what the apostolic church understood to be the will of the exalted Lord."

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When Thomas Carlyle handed the finished manuscript of *The French Revolution* to his wife, he is reported to have said: "I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man."* It is only books so born that will pass the test of the generations. What is tawdry, superficial, mechanical, may win the plaudits of one generation, but no book is likely to reach the heart of man for centuries which did not come from the heart of its writer. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is such a book. Springing from one of the great creative epochs—or rather the greatest creative epoch—in human history, throbbing with new life, full of startling and daring ideas, far from absorbed or outdated by twenty centuries since, it came "direct and flamingly" from its author's heart. The unintelligent employment of it as an examination book and storehouse of arid facts for memorizing have robbed it of its vitality for many of us, and, once school days are past, few go back to it with any expectations. Reading only odd verses here and there out of unattractively printed pages, we miss its flaming enthusiasm and fail to find its heroes inspiring. We need to get behind its ink and paper to recapture its setting in a real world, and its characters and its author as living men.

* *Carlyle's Life in London*, I. p. 89.

The world of the Acts may be summed up in the words Rome, Jerusalem, Athens.

For all practical purposes the civilized world of the day was the Roman Empire, embracing all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. Rome dominated the world and the imaginations of men. Its rule had brought peace, a common civilization, a common language, and law, and freedom of travel. And the splendid and powerful city on the seven hills was the pivot of it all. As symbol and bond of unity there was the Emperor, deified and worshipped by his people. Something of the spell of ancient Rome may be gathered from the picture drawn in the Book of Revelation (17-18) at a later date when the Empire had become the enemy of the Church.

But when Acts was written, Rome was the friend of Christianity, unconsciously preparing the way of the Lord. Paul is proud of his Roman citizenship, and Luke records with care many instances of the friendship of Roman officials to the infant Church and its preachers. Acts is the story of the victorious progress of the good news of Christ through the Roman world, beginning at Jerusalem, and the climax is reached with the triumphant words, "And so we came to Rome."

Radiating in all directions through the Empire were the famous roads, making traveling easy and rapid, so much so that never, until railways were laid down, was traveling in Europe as easy and safe as in the days of the Roman Empire. Thus by these roads Paul could pass freely from one country to another, or find messengers to carry his letters to the churches. His Roman citizenship everywhere gave him status and recognized privileges. Roman law and Roman governors protected him from the fanatical persecution of his own nation and from mob violence. His plan of campaign led him to the occupation of the chief centers of the Empire and ultimately to its heart in Rome itself.

But dominant as Rome was, Jerusalem was by no means negligible. The city itself was wealthy and splendid, with Herod's temple as its crowning glory. The Jewish people, numerous, wealthy, influential, hating and hated, were scattered over the known world. Jerusalem was still to them the city of the great King, the object of loyalty and the goal of pilgrimage. Judea was the center of anti-Roman feeling. Believing that bondage to the Gentiles could be no part of the will of God for His chosen people, the Jews were restless and rebellious, irritated by Roman misgovernment. It was not till after the period covered by Acts that the smoldering embers burst into flame in the Jewish rising of A.D. 66, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in the year 70, but the increasing turbulence of the Jews can be traced in the Book.

Despite its growing antagonism to Christianity, Judaism, like Rome, ministered to the spread of the Gospel. In the Jewish colonies scattered over the Empire, Paul found a starting place for his work, and it was to the synagogues that he went first with his message. The synagogues provided ready-made audiences—and not only of Jews. Many Gentiles in the decay of the old religions, had found in the pure monotheism of the Jews an answer to their spiritual cravings and had attached themselves to the synagogues, some becoming regular proselytes, most perhaps adherents—the "God-fearers" referred to in Acts. And among a wider circle still some knowledge of the Jewish faith was to be found.

From Athens the ancient glory had departed. Greece was no longer a political power, but in the realms of literature, art and philosophy she had conquered her Roman conquerors. It was a Græco-Roman civilization that Rome took with her to her subject peoples, and it was Greek that was the language of commerce, government and polite society. The Jews of the Dispersion spoke Greek and used Greek translations of their Hebrew scriptures. Dubbed Hellenists or Grecians by their coreligionists in Palestine, they had come

under the broadening influence of Greek ideas. The Jews of Alexandria in particular devoted themselves with enthusiasm to the study of Greek classics and philosophy and sought to reconcile Plato and Moses. It was among these Grecian Jews and the "God-fearing" Judaized Greeks that the Christian Church found its most ardent and valuable adherents. Stephen and Paul and Apollos, to name only the most prominent, were among the Hellenists.

Athens thus joined hands with Rome in preparing the way for Christianity. It had provided a common language and a common intellectual background, so that Paul could find an understanding audience in Asia Minor, Ephesus, Corinth, Athens or Rome. Greek philosophy too had undermined the old pagan beliefs. They still lingered on among the common people, as Acts shows, but for thinking men the old idolatries had gone, and they were ready, even aching, for some positive, believable faith. And in the elementary principles of current philosophy—the unity of God, the brotherhood of man, the spirituality of the divine nature—the Christian preachers could and did find a starting point for their message.

It is characteristic of Luke that he takes special pains to relate his story to this world of thought and action. As in his Gospel, so here, he connects his history with that of the Empire by chronological notes and by references to persons otherwise known on the stage of world history. No other writer in the New Testament even mentions the name of a Roman emporer. But Luke by the abundance and detail of his references, mostly incidental, to the background of his story, lays himself peculiarly open to verification or detection by our ever growing knowledge of the Roman Empire. Had he not been really the companion of Paul as he claims to be, but some later inventor—as certain critics have held—he would inevitably have been detected ere now. But he has never been caught napping yet. It is indeed one of the romances of New Testament study that again and again

in recent years excavations in Asia Minor have substantiated the accuracy of his story in details previously questioned,—*e.g.* the peculiar titles for magistrates in different towns, Politarchs at Thessalonica, the Protos at Malta.

The book has a hero, and perhaps its chief interest lies in the clear characterization of the Apostle Paul "in his educated tone of polished courtesy, in his quick and vehement temper, in the extraordinary versatility and adaptability which made him at home in every society, moving at ease in all surroundings and everywhere the centre of interest, whether he is the Socratic dialectician in the agora of Athens, or the rhetorician in its University, or conversing with kings and proconsuls, or advising in the council on shipboard, or cheering a broken-spirited crew to make one more effort for life. Wherever Paul is, no one present has eyes for any but him"*

Yet Acts is not the biography of Paul, it is the life story of the early Christian Church. It is indeed the Acts of the Holy Spirit rather than the Acts of the Apostles. From first page to last it is the Spirit of God who takes the initiative, bringing guidance and power to the Church. The Acts is the continuation of the Gospel. In Acts Jesus is no longer present in the flesh, but His Spirit is continuing what He "began to do and to teach" in the days of His flesh. Acts is the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. It begins with the coming of the Spirit in power upon the little group. He binds them together in fellowship as "brethren"—rich and poor, slave and free, Gentiles and Jews. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit which leads men to join themselves with the Church, which wins the Samaritans and the Gentile Cornelius. It is the mark of the Christian to be "full of the Holy Spirit." He is the guide in the advance of the Church. He selects and equips men for special service. He directs Philip. He leads Peter to baptize Cornelius. He orders the setting aside of Paul and Barnabas for the work of preaching. He guides Paul in his journeyings. He leads the Church into all truth

* Ramsay, *St. Paul*, p. 21.

and speaks in the decisions of her councils: "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." The Spirit of Jesus acts through men, through a society, His body—the instrument of His will.

Christianity came into a disillusioned, ineffective world as "the religion of the Spirit of power."* It brought men moral energy and hope. "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (1^8). Acts is the story of the fulfillment of the promise and the program. It is the story of the reception and use of power. It is no text book of theology, but a record of the tremendous things that happened in the lives of men and women. The new power made men face privation and persecution with cheerfulness. It made Paul and Silas sing in prison at midnight. The apostolic age was the witness of the miraculous achievement of a new moral order and of a society so vital that it stood when civilization collapsed in ruins. The story tells of triumphs of ethical achievement, of men out of weakness made strong. To the demon-haunted twilight of the ancient world Christianity brought the light of the knowledge of the love of God, faith in the possibilities of human nature, and dedication to the stern tasks of the establishment of the Kingdom in a hostile world. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Behind all the events he records, Luke sees the working of the Spirit molding the destiny of the Church.

The new Church was inevitably missionary; not merely in obedience to a formal command to go and make disciples of all nations, but because the experience of God in Christ impelled the men who had it to share the good news with their fellows. They could not but speak the things they had seen and heard. "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel," said Paul. So in Acts we see the Church growing. It grows

* Harnack.

both externally and internally. It spreads from Jerusalem to Rome. First it goes to Samaria, and what a triumph of the Spirit of Christ it was that made Jews go and preach to the despised Samaritan—like a mission of brotherhood from Ulster to Sinn Fein. Then it goes through Judea and Galilee. Then it reaches Antioch, which becomes a second mother-city for the Church. Then it spreads through one province after another, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, till it reaches Ephesus. Thence it leaps across the sea to Rome, the heart of the world.

But not less important than its growth geographically, was the growth of the missionary spirit in the heart of the Church itself. It would be tedious to follow in detail all the ramifications, and would involve us in many issues outside the scope of this book. But the main line of events should be remembered.* Stage by stage the story tells how the traditional restrictions fell away as the Church yielded to the logic of facts. Gradually the door opened to admit all sorts and conditions of men; first the unorthodox Samaritan kinsmen of the Jews, and then even uncircumcised Gentiles.

The Book of Acts makes it clear that at first the little company in Jerusalem adhered strictly to the Jewish practices, joining as of old in the worship of the Temple. But among them were some of the more broad-minded Hellenist believers, and there was not a little suspicion and distrust between them and the stricter section. A complaint was made that the Hellenist widows were not being fairly treated in the distribution of charitable help. The Church therefore appointed seven men to make this work their special care, all of them with Greek names and, therefore, presumably themselves Hellenists. One of them is definitely stated to be a proselyte (6^{1-6}).

Two of these men at once showed themselves to be leaders of outstanding quality and champions of emancipation,

* For a fuller treatment of this question, which I have largely followed here, see Lightfoot, *Galatians,* pp. 295 ff.

Stephen and Philip. Stephen in his courageous speech was the first to claim unfettered freedom for the gospel, and to assert the temporary character of the institutions of Judaism as but one stage in God's education of men. The charge against him of teaching that "Jesus of Nazareth...shall change the customs which Moses delivered us (6^{14}) was true. For this freedom of the gospel Stephen laid down his life, but his blood was the seed of the Gentile Church. The controversy he started led to a general persecution of the Church, and many of the Christians were driven from Jerusalem (8^{1-4}). This dispersion led, as we shall see, to the founding of the first Gentile congregation.

Meantime Philip carried on the work begun by Stephen, Transcending like his Master the prejudices of his nation, he boldly went to Samaria, and preached Christ. The response was immediate and wonderful, and many were baptized. Peter and John hearing the news, came down from Jerusalem and gave their approval, seeing that God was manifestly at work. Did John remember a former visit to Samaria? (Luke 9^{54}). The Holy Spirit had broken down the first barrier (8^{5-17}).

The second barrier was quick to follow. The Spirit led Philip to win and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch, a man with a double disability, racial and physical, in the eyes of a strict Jew.

Peter all this time was in difficulties; not because he was ignorant or doubtful as to the applicability of the gospel to the world,* but rather as to the conditions—whether, for example, it was necessary for the non-Jew to enter the Christian Church by way of circumcision. Was the door of the Synagogue the portal by which the nations must find their way into the Church? † But a vision overcame his scruples (10^{9-16}). The divine approval clearly followed his preaching

* See Acts 2^{16-21} and ^{39}. Remember too that he was addressing Jews.

† Ramsay, *Paul*, p. 46.

to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his house, to the amazement of the Jewish Christians who were present. But where God led they could not but follow (11[17]). "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized" (and so formally admitted into the Christian Church), "who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (10[47]). And so the line of advance followed by Philip was made clear to the chief apostle.

Meanwhile the persecuted Christians in their flight from Jerusalem had carried the gospel with them. At first they preached "to none save only to Jews." But then some bold spirits, Hellenists, dared to preach to Greeks at Antioch. Again the divine approval was clearly shown: "the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great multitude that believed turned unto the Lord" (11[19-21]). It was here in Antioch that the disciples first won the nickname of "Christians" (11[26]). Again the Mother Church at Jerusalem sent a representative, this time Barnabas, to investigate the situation, and again the leading of God was recognized.

Thus the principle became established that Christ was for all men. But problems still remained. Granted that circumcision was not necessary for entrance to the Church, what submission, if any, to the Law of Moses was to be demanded of Christians? Were these uncircumcised Gentile Christians to be regarded as on an equal footing in the Church with the Jewish Christians?

It is at this point that a new leader emerges. Saul had been marvelously transformed from persecutor to disciple. After some years of preparation, he is now called to responsible work, and quickly takes his place as the dominant figure in the fellowship. Brought up in the strictest sect of the Jews, he becomes the Apostle to the Gentiles, the great missionary leader of the early Church. When the spirit of Judaism reasserts itself within the Church, it is he who is the stoutest fighter for the liberty of the gospel, whether at the conference at Jerusalem or in confronting the Judaizers

in the local churches.* It is no part of the purpose of this book to trace in detail the part he played or the course of the dispute, but we must devote a further chapter to the work and teaching of this greatest missionary leader of the early Church, who more than any other one man was God's instrument in transforming Christianity from a Jewish sect into a universal Church.

And yet as we remember with gratitude the great leaders of the Church—Stephen, Philip, Peter, John, Barnabas and Paul—it is well to remember that in those early days, as always, the missionary enterprise was the responsibility and work of Christians as a whole. It avails little to have leaders if there are no followers. "The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not professed teachers," writes Harnack in *The Expansion of Christianity*, "but the Christians themselves in proportion to their faith and vigor....Not only were the confessors and martyrs missionaries; it was characteristic of this religion that every faithful professor of it helped in its propaganda. Christians were to let their light shine, so that the heathen might see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven. If they were penetrated by their convictions and lived according to the precepts of their religion, their manner of life would necessarily be a most distinct and forcible missionary sermon. ...We cannot doubt that the great mission of early Christianity was in effect carried out by unprofessional missionaries, as Justin tells us in so many words." This passage was written more especially of the sub-apostolic age, but it is undoubtedly true of apostolic times.

Dr. Glover in *Jesus in the Experience of Men*† comments on the same fact. We do not know who founded the great Syrian Church which penetrated to Malabar in South India and to Sian Fu in West China, where a tablet remains

* Acts 15^{1-32} and the letter to the Galatians, which is mainly concerned with this controversy.

† Pp. 191 ff.

to commemorate it. Nor do we know who took the gospel to Alexandria. "Christians went, and their Friend went with them; they could not help telling his story; and nameless common men working for Christ among men as lowly and nameless as themselves laid the foundation on which rose one of the greatest schools of Christendom. 'I look upon all the world as my parish,' said John Wesley in a sentence memorable in the history of English Christianity; so did these unknown men look on the world, remembering a recorded saying of their Friend, and not supposing they were doing anything remarkable....When Tertullian in A.D. 197 writes: 'We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything, cities, islands, camps, forums...all we have left you is the temples,' when he says that even in Britain there are Christians and beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, he points to the results of Christian life and preaching and martyrdom, but he does not know the names of the men and women."

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION

To all external appearance the world—such of it as was known—was one in Paul's day as it had never been before, and has perhaps never been since. One civilization held sway from Chester in the savage British Isles to Cappadocia, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The Roman roads linked all the provinces with the mother-city on the Tiber. The same law ruled, the same language was spoken, the same type of architecture prevailed. Travel was safer and more rapid than it ever was again until the advent of the steamer and the express train. It was a thoroughly cosmopolitan age.

But who should know better than we that it takes more than intricate organization to make the world one in reality? We have recovered the Roman efficiency and even bettered it. A dull sameness is creeping over the externals of the world's life. You will find telegraph poles and tramcars and gramophones and cinema palaces almost anywhere you care to go. Charlie Chaplin is as visible in China as in Oxford Street. But that did not prevent us having the Great War, and the Terrible Peace. It is not much good getting two men into one boat unless you can induce them to row in the same direction. Even broadcasting and aeroplanes have not made the world one at heart.

And the Roman Empire had no soul. It was founded on violence. Rome "made a solitude and called it peace." It lacked a moral foundation. It transcended national boundaries—by the heavy hand of its legions. It had a splendid

civilization, poets and philosophers and artists. But its splendor was bought at the price of the degradation of men and women in slavery. It traded in the souls of men. There was no unifying spirit, no common mind.

Not that the world lacked fine theories. Stoicism held up beautiful ideals of human brotherhood. In the city of Zeus, the Kingdom of the Mind, all men were one in virtue of their common gift of reason. But it was a faith for the professors and does not seem to have borne much practical fruit in politics—like international congresses of scientists in more modern times. And Stoicism believed that slavery was a permanent and necessary institution. It was vain to look to Stoicism for a soul for the world.

Still less could Judaism serve in its current form. It had erected exclusiveness into a religion. The world was divided into Jews—and others. Jesus, quoting Deutero-Isaiah, declared that the Temple at Jerusalem should be a house of prayer for all nations, but the Jews had built the denial of their missionary vocation into its very stones. Between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Israelites stood a stone barrier with the inscription in Latin and Greek: "No Gentile admitted here. He who transgresses this law will have only himself to blame for the penalty, which is death."* Between Jew and Gentile there was a wall of partition. Even when they became Christians the Jews in the early Church found it hard to believe that God wanted the Gentiles in the Church just as they were, without becoming naturalized Jews. It was Paul who first appreciated the revolutionary change that Christ had made.

In his younger days he had shared to the full the prejudices of his race, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee." As a student he was familiar with the cosmopolitan talk of the Stoics, but all his religious instincts

* Josephus. *Jewish Wars,* V. 5. 2. A stone was found a few years ago near the Temple with this inscription in Greek. It is now in the Museum of Constantinople.

would revolt against their obliteration of fundamental distinctions, their joining together of what God had forever separated. Yet with that Temple barrier in mind, and remembering perhaps that he had been mobbed there when he took Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the Court of the Gentiles, he wrote to the Ephesian Church that Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2^{14}). It is hard for us to appreciate what it meant for Paul to utter those words. As Professor Dodd writes: "Perhaps it was like an American of the South being obliged to admit that he must sit at the feet of the negro, or an Australian asked to view with equanimity, even to further, the spread of 'yellow' civilization."* The Stoics, after all, were right. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17^{26}). This is the mystery of the Gospel of which Paul so often speaks (*e.g.* Eph. 3^{4-6}, Col. $1^{26\ f.}$); "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest" (Rom. 16^{25}). God is not the God of the Jews only. Christ is equally for every man. That is the hidden purpose of God now revealed to the world. It was this that set Paul at variance with his own people and brought a murderous mob upon him in Jerusalem. There is no difference in the sight of God between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 10^{12}).

And that was a secret till Jesus came. There were hints of the truth in Stoicism, as we have seen, but it never got further than a theory and it left the slave a slave. It was Jesus who first made humanity conscious of itself. Till then Greeks and Romans had reckoned all other nations barbarians,† as the Chinese did in more recent years. And we know what the Jews thought. But in Christ Jesus "there

* *The Meaning of Paul for Today,* p. 45.

† Aristotle held that men were naturally divided into Greeks and barbarians, the former fitted to rule, the latter to be slaves.—*Politics,* 1253 *b,* 1263 *a.*

is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. 3^{11}).

It is important to remember that Paul is not here merely propounding theories, he is recording facts. When he was challenged by the Judaizers, it was not by argument that he triumphed, but by pointing to a Gentile Christian community which manifested the fruits of the Spirit in its life. If God had as a matter of fact granted them salvation, He could not mean it to be conditioned by Jewish antecedents. Paul won the controversy not by clever reasoning but because he could appeal to incontrovertible facts (cf. Acts 11^{15-18}, 15^{7-9}). The wall of partition had fallen in his own heart—and that was no small triumph. He had seen it fall too in the hearts of many more. When Christ came into a man's life, down went the wall. "Remember you Gentiles were in those days outside Christ, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the Promise, devoid of hope and God within the world. Whereas now, within Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He who has made both of us a unity and destroyed the barrier which kept us apart" (Eph. 2^{11-14}, Moffatt).

This was no accidental unforeseen result. It came about as part of God's "eternal purpose" (Eph. 3^{11}). In the first three chapters of his letter to the Ephesians Paul sets forth the plan of God for world-wide redemption. He rejoiced that he was called to play his part in the realizing of so glorious an enterprise: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3^{8}).

The cross of Christ brought new ideas of both God and man into the ancient world. Jesus had told His stories of the way in which God loved men and sought them. In His life He lived it out and the cross was the summary of it all. "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5^{8}). God *so*

loved the world. That is what God is like. And if God was really like that, then many of the old assumptions upon which life had been based became intolerable. The sight of the cross made men change their minds about all the fundamental questions. They began to think differently—to repent. "Beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another." A new estimate of the worth of human life arose. Men looked with new eyes upon their fellows, brothers for whom Christ died. And they saw Christ lay hold upon men of all sorts and conditions—Jews and Greeks and Romans, slaves and free men, educated and illiterate, men chained by every sort of vice and folly—and make altogether new men of them, binding them together in a fellowship of love and service such as the world had never seen. "In these words," writes Professor Kennedy of Gal. 3^{28}, "all the fundamental antitheses of the old world are resolved. One epoch is for ever closed. A new day has begun to dawn."* The resources of language are strained as the New Testament writers try to describe what had happened to them and their friends. Born again, out of darkness into light, new creations, redeemed—these great phrases so glibly on our tongues, so smooth-worn now, were once new coined to express incredible things that the mercy of God had made possible. It all started in a small way, a little group here and a little group there—but it spread.

By the second century the average Christian had come to regard himself as a member of a new world-wide fellowship. "Christians," wrote one of them, "are not different from the rest of mankind in country or language or customs. They do not live in special cities of their own. They do not speak a peculiar dialect or practice any social idiosyncrasies. They live in Greek or Barbarian cities according as each man's lot has fallen to him. They follow the customs in which they were brought up in dress and diet, and in other ways of life. And yet in a marvelous and admittedly start-

* *The Missionary Motive*, p. 55.

ling way they show forth the constitution of their own Commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but are there as pilgrims. They share in everything as citizens, and yet submit to everything as aliens. Every foreign land is their country, yet every country a foreign land to them. They pass their time upon the earth, but their citizenship is in heaven....They are attacked by the Jews and persecuted by the Greeks as belonging to another race, yet those who hate them can give no reason for their hostility. In one word, what the soul is to the body, that Christians are to the world. The soul extends through all the limbs of the body: so do Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul has its habitation in the body but yet it is not of the body: so Christians have their habitation in the world and yet are not of the world."*

A world-wide fellowship, not interfering with the local patriotism of the citizen, but yet demanding a higher spiritual allegiance, so that a man was Christian first and Roman second, that was what the Church was. Should it not be so again? We no longer speak in terms of Jew and Gentile, but of "the rising tide of color," yellow Australia, French and German, but the lessons Paul learnt of Christ in his day are the lessons we need to learn in ours. Is not the Christian's allegiance supremely due to Christ? Is he not linked in a world fellowship whose claims transcend those of any nation? Such a Church would be a menace to all jingoisms, junkerdoms and chauvinisms and would surely meet again the persecution it has known before. But is not that the Church which Christ intended and which Paul planned?

In all this Paul believed that God's eternal purpose was being revealed in the Church. In this growing fellowship world history was coming to its consummation. God was bringing all things to a head in Christ (Eph. 1^{10}). It was

* *Epistle to Diognetus,* chaps. 5-6. Quoted in Barry, *St. Paul and Social Psychology,* which I have found very suggestive for this chapter.

for this that the world was made. To proclaim world fellowship is to preach no impossible Utopianism but the will of God—the fundamental principles of human life. It is unscientific to talk about the inherent combativeness of humanity, of the inevitability of war and hatred. Strength, survival, advance in life have been along the line of fellowship, not of strife. For God made the world for fellowship. Listen to the verdict of a scientist and psychologist: "Socialized gregariousness is the goal of man's development. A transcendental union with his fellows is the destiny of the human individual...And it is the attainment of this towards which the constantly growing altruism of man is directed.... Poets and prophets have at times dimly seen this inevitable trend of Nature. Biology affords unmistakable evidence of it....The needs and capacity that were at work in the primæval amœba are at work in (man). In his very flesh and bones is the impulse towards closer and closer union in larger and larger fellowships. To-day he is fighting his way towards the goal, fighting for the perfect unit, which Nature has so long foreshadowed, in which there shall be a complete union of its members, unobstructed by egoism or hatred, by harshness or arrogance or the wolfish lust for blood. That perfect unit will be a new creature, recognizable as a single entity: to its million-minded power and knowledge no barrier will be unsurmountable, no gulf impassable, no task too great."*

"That in modern biological language is the equivalent of Paul's thought when he says it is the purpose of the ages to gather up all things in Christ, uniting the human race in one new man."†

Fired by so great a vision, constrained by the love of Christ, Paul sped over land and ocean without rest. John Wesley, hearing of the Scilly Isles across the narrow sea,

* Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd*, pp. 167, 213.

† Barry, p. 77.

notes in his Journal, "I have had for some time a great desire to go and publish there the love of God, our Saviour, if it were but for one day." So was it with Paul, "a man much nearer to George Fox or John Wesley than to Origen or Calvin; the greatest of missionaries and pioneers, and only incidentally a great theologian."* "The whole man was missionary," writes Dr. W. M. Macgregor. "A sea tempted him to cross it; a range of hills spoke of men lying out of sight upon the farther slope; and wherever he came, he had the one errand, to make known this mystery of God."†

In Christ Jesus "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. 3^{11}). "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10^{12}). "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free" (1 Cor. 12^{13}).

* Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, p. 206.

† *Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, p. 243.

CHAPTER VII

THE QUEST FOR THE CITY OF GOD

When imperial Rome lay humbled to the dust before the victorious Goths, Augustine set out to write his treatise *On the City of God.* The civilization of Rome which had ruled the world for centuries had crumbled, but Augustine saw rising from its ruins a new social order founded by God and ruled by His laws. The doom of paganism with all its splendors and follies, virtues and vices, was sealed, and the Church of Christ could set to work to build the city of God.

Augustine was not the first, nor has he been the last, to dream of such a city. Plato's *Republic,* More's *Utopia,* Bacon's *New Atlantis,* Butler's *Erewhon,* Morris's *News from Nowhere,* Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* are only a few of the better-known pictures of it that men have painted. Humanity has journeyed through the centuries sustained by "the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road."*

The Bible, too, is full of these dreams. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Abraham set out from Ur of the Chaldees because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (11^{10}). Prophets and Psalmists sing of that city. It was a divinely ordered society which Jesus proclaimed when He told men that the Kingdom of God was at hand. Paul wrote of it in the second chapter of his letter to the Ephesians. And the New Testament closes with a vision of the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.

* Masefield, *The Seekers.*

In the Old Testament this triumph of the will of God in human society was often conceived of in very narrow terms. To the intense patriotism of the Jews, sure of being Jehovah's chosen nation, and embittered by oppression, it seemed that one day their enemies must be subdued and the throne of David dominate the world. They exulted in the thought of a king who should break the heathen with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2^9), who should wade to triumph through the blood of his enemies (Isa. 63^3). They pictured the Gentiles bringing their wealth as tribute, and their kings making humble obeisance (Isa. 60). Even when Jehovah was the center of the picture rather than themselves, it was sometimes worship compelled by threats and fear of which they thought (Zech. 14^{16-19}).

But mingling with these were nobler hopes, in which Jerusalem was to become in a far finer sense the metropolis of the world. The love of Isaiah for his city is profound and moving. "More than Athens to Demosthenes, Rome to Juvenal, Florence to Dante, is Jerusalem to Isaiah. She is his immediate and ultimate regard, the centre and return of all his thoughts, the hinge of the history of his time, the one thing worth preserving amidst its disasters, the summit of those brilliant hopes with which he fills the future....It is for her defence he battles through fifty years of statesmanship, and all his prophecy may be said to travail in anguish for her new birth. He was never away from her walls, but not even the psalms of the captives by the rivers of Babylon, with the desire of exile upon them, exhibit more beauty and pathos than the lamentations which Isaiah poured upon Jerusalem's sufferings or the visions in which he described her future solemnity and peace."* Right in the forefront of his prophecies (Isa. 2^{1-4}) is set the picture of his beloved city as the light and center of the world.†

* George Adam Smith, *Isaiah*, I. p. 22 f.

† The passage occurs also in Mic. 4^{1-5}, but whether the prophecy

The time is to come* when the warring nations of the world, now divided in allegiance, walking every one in the name of its own god (Mic. 4^5) shall learn to worship the one true God, Jehovah. Out of the acknowledgment of the common Lord peace will spring. For they will submit their quarrels to His arbitration, and, satisfied by His just decision, the peoples will give up warfare forever. Their now useless weapons they transform into instruments of peace. The sword is not shattered but becomes a ploughshare; the spear is not snapped but fashioned into a pruning-hook. For true peace is not just the absence of war. It is full of positive and constructive tasks in which all the energies misused and perverted in war can find healthy and satisfying scope (cf. also Isa. 11^{1-9}).

The capital of this League of Nations, says Isaiah, is to be Zion; not because of its size or political and commercial power, but because it is the City of God. On a common religious faith the brotherhood of man is to be securely founded (cf. Zech. 8^{20-23} and 1 Kings 8^{41-43}).†

But, splendid as this vision is, the writer of Psalm 87 rises higher still. The date is uncertain though the mention of Babylon suggests that it is post-exilic. The central thought of the Psalm is much the same as that of the passage we have just been considering. The Psalmist, too, sees Zion as the spiritual metropolis of the world. But in his vision

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is by Isaiah or both prophets quote from another source, Isaiah clearly adopts it as his own. Some scholars have suggested that the passage was inserted by later editors, but there seems to me no adequate reason for supposing this.

* This is all that is really implied by the phrase "in the last days." There is no sense of the ending of time. G. A. Smith translates "in the issue of the days."

† Cf. another prophecy of Isaiah (19^{23-25}). There is to be a highway between Egypt and Assyria, Israel's two inveterate foes, and on it Egyptian and Assyrian will pass to and fro in friendship with one another and with Israel, "whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

the nations are not captives or tributaries, nor even doing voluntary homage to the greatness of Zion, but become by a new birth her sons. Even Israel's worst enemies are welcomed as brothers. Egypt and Babylon, between whom Israel lay like a piece of metal between hammer and anvil—Egypt her one-time slave-master and in Isaiah's day a disastrous influence on the statesmen of Judah, Babylon that had held the Jews in bondage and then in exile for nearly 70 years—are enrolled as Zion's children, and with them are Philistia the ancient foe, Tyre the type of godless luxury, and distant Ethiopia. Jehovah takes a census of the nations and sets them down man by man as born in Zion. To the Psalmist, says Delitzsch, "the end of all history is that Zion becomes the metropolis of all peoples." Indeed one may almost say that all peoples become one people; the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of Jehovah. So Paul, writing to the Ephesian Gentiles, reminds them that once they had been separated from the Jews as by a wall of partition, but that through Christ, Jew and Gentile alike "have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2^{18-19}).

The Psalm has not been, and cannot be, literally fulfilled. Its author expressed his hope, as he had to, in the phraseology and setting of his own day. Babylon and its glory passed away without acknowledging the sovereignty of Jehovah. The Temple hill is not the visible center of world religion. "The hour cometh," said our Lord, "when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4^{21}; cf. Zeph. 2^{11} and Mal. 1^{11}). But beneath the temporary form the vision abides in truth and power.

Centuries later this hope of the City of God kindled the imagination of the writer of the Apocalypse. His New Jerusalem (Rev. 21), like the Zion of Isaiah and the Psalmist, was to be built in this world and not in the next. "Spears and pruning-hooks are not part of the furniture of heaven,"

and the seer saw that his city, too, was to come down from heaven to the earth. It was a dream city, if you like, but a dream of the world and not of the skies, to be inhabited not by spirits but by living men of flesh and blood. The New Jerusalem is John's picture of the ideal society, the world purged of wrong, the inauguration of the perfect reign of God. It was his conception of the answer to the prayer taught him by his Lord, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth*," expressed though it inevitably is in the language of poetry and symbolism.

In that city the power of evil is broken, nothing can enter it that defiles; righteousness rules its life. Health and happiness are there; sickness and death are gone, and all tears are wiped away. The ugliness that defaces earth's cities and degrades the spirits of their inhabitants gives place to the beauty of a city with streets of gold and gates of pearl, a river clear as crystal and trees in the midst of the streets. It is the home of a redeemed humanity: "they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it."

> "China and Ind, Hellas and France
> Each hath its own inheritance;
> And each to Truth's rich market brings
> Its bright divine imaginings,
> In rival tribute to surprise
> The world with native merchandise." *

And in the heart of the city are the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Granted that all this is symbolism, is it all merely "the baseless fabric of a vision"? Does there underlie the Utopian dreamings of prophet and psalmist, apocalyptist and poet,

* Robert Bridges. "The true servant of God," writes Catherine of Siena in a letter to Father Wm. Flete, "rejoices in every type that he sees, saying: Thanks be to Thee, Eternal Father, that Thou hast many mansions in Thy house. . . . He rejoices more in the differences among men than he would in seeing them all walk in the same way; for so he sees more manifest the greatness of the goodness of God."

any abiding truth destined one day to become a reality? Are these all but "idle singers of an empty day"?

Sir George Adam Smith points out that Isaiah's picture of Zion, which we have described above, does not stand alone. It is followed immediately by two others. After the vision of the ideal Jerusalem (2^{1-4}) is a picture of Jerusalem as she really is (2^{5}-4^{1}). The ideal Jerusalem was to be the temple of the true religion for all men. Into the actual Jerusalem all kinds of foreign gods and superstitions have entered. The poor are oppressed. Its women are selfish and vain. Then comes a third picture, again of Jerusalem as she shall be (4^{2-6}); but this time the prophet insists that only through stern judgment and divine redemption can the change be brought about.

It is good for us to dream dreams about the coming of the world-wide Kingdom of God. It is good, too, that we should look stedfastly at the world as it really is. The war that was to end war is over, but the war spirit remains. Only poverty and helplessness prevent the outbreak of another conflict in Europe. The nations still arm against each other. In our own land widespread unemployment bears its inevitable fruits of degradation and bitterness. Housing conditions put a premium upon disease and vice and crime. Capital and labor stand in opposing camps, each watchful to take advantage of any weakness in the other's armor. Western industrialism is reproducing in the East the horrors of human suffering, of long hours, sweated labor, exploitation of women and children, from which we are only slowly freeing ourselves in Britain. There are rumblings of a threatened storm of inter-racial conflict.

No mere dreams will build the City of God in such a world as this. The clearer our vision of the world as God would have it, the more vividly do we see the degradation and division of the world as it is. "For the possession of a great ideal does not mean, as so many fondly imagine, work accomplished; it means work revealed—work revealed so vast,

often so impossible, that faith and hope die down, and the enthusiast of yesterday becomes the cynic of to-morrow."* Is then pessimism our only refuge, that dull disillusionment that has settled upon the spirits of so many after the dissipating of those dreams of "a new world" that filled their hearts in wartime? Not if we believe in Christ.

If Christianity is true, the hope of the City of God on earth is no wild dream. "Now we see not all things put under Him, but we see Jesus" (Heb. 2^8 f.), and in Him the promise and assurance of it all. Even already in the Christian Church we can see the earnest of the City. Sir John Seely points out how in the early Church "the city of God, of which the Stoics doubtfully and feebly spoke, was now set up before the eyes of men. It was no insubstantial city, such as we fancy in the clouds, no invisible pattern such as Plato thought might be laid up in heaven, but a visible corporation whose members met together to eat bread and drink wine, and into which they were initiated by bodily immersion in water. Here the Gentile met the Jew whom he had been accustomed to regard as an enemy of the human race; the Roman met the lying Greek sophist, the Syrian slave, the gladiator born beside the Danube. In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and to each other."† The history of the centuries since tells the same tale. In spite of all her failures and imperfections the Church of Christ has proved her power, though hitherto only fitfully and within comparatively narrow limits, to transcend the divisions of nation and race and class, to destroy ancient enmities, to uproot social evils and to make possible for men a fuller life. She has taught the world the very standards by which she herself is now judged. And many other movements in the world, not all avowedly Chris-

* G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. I. p. 32.

† *Ecce Homo*, Eversley Edition, p. 153.

tian, have in them so much of the Spirit of Christ that they too are helping mankind toward the city.

During the dark days of the war I heard a man passionately pleading the cause of peace. For forty years, he said, he had been proclaiming the ideal of a warless world, and still he believed in its coming. "And how much nearer is the world to your ideal after all your preaching?" asked a cynic in his audience. "Forty years nearer," was the instant reply. Black as the present may look, the student of history can find many grounds of hope. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13^{11}).

But though that is true, belief in the possibility of the building of the City of God on earth cannot be founded upon past attainments or any estimate of probabilities. It is only firmly based on belief in the love of God.* When our Lord was challenged to justify His faith in immortality, it was to the love of God that He appealed, not to pseudo-scientific or philosophical arguments. In the very nature of God's relation with men lay the guarantee of its permanence. If God is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, if He loves men and evokes in them an answering love, He could not destroy them. The Fatherhood of God is the surest, and in the end the only, "proof" of immortality. So it is with the City of God. If God is Father of men He cannot be indifferent to their strivings after social regeneration to make love and righteousness regnant and visible on earth. Indeed, the belief in the City, and the faith and courage that have sought it in all ages can come only from Him. "Hope is the mark of all whom God makes His friends."†

We need not be surprised when Mr. Bertrand Russell

* For help in working out this argument I am indebted to an article by Miss Lily Dougall in *The Interpreter,* July, 1923, on "Faith and the World's Future."

† Dante.

writes: "That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."* To the atheist or agnostic the issues of the struggle between good and evil on the earth may well seem uncertain; as to them also the prospects of a life beyond the grave must be doubtful. But to those who believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is part of their faith that it is the Father's good purpose to give them the Kingdom, as Jesus Himself said that it was.

Over against Mr. Russell's moving declaration of despair let us set the faith of William Carey. In a letter to Vanderkemp, the pioneer missionary of the London Missionary Society in South Africa, Carey wrote: "Cold reason alone would suggest that a world so beautiful and in many ways so plainly under the government of God, cannot for ever be the theatre of oppression, sedition, slavery and war, and would incite us to hasten the reign of righteousness and peace. Nevertheless we have little sure hope of this being accomplished, till we read the divine promises and consider the pledge of their fulfilment in the death of our adorable Redeemer. Then firm rock is felt beneath our feet, and we

* *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 47.

know that the earth shall be filled with God's glory, as the waters cover the sea."*

It must be recognized, however, that many Christians do not see that the establishment of the Kingdom or City of God on earth is a necessary part of Christian faith. Such a hope even seems to them materialistic. So the argument must be carried further.

We can agree with those who hold the view that this earth is primarily "a vale of soul-making," that its purpose is to bring men to a realization and acceptance of their sonship of God. Human life and God's purposes have issues that go beyond this planet. But this surely does not mean that the political and social conditions of life on earth do not matter to the Christian. If it is materialistic to care intensely about the material well-being of men, then Jesus was a materialist. Health of body was to Him part of the gift of salvation. He declared that men would be judged at the last day not by their theology but by their attitude to the social need of their time—the hungry, the naked, the sick, the prisoner (Matt. 25^{31-46}). Christianity does not regard men as disembodied souls. It is true that our standing in the sight of God is not determined by our education, health, our wealth or our poverty. But it is equally true that these factors exert a powerful influence upon the spiritual life. Sometimes environment can be so inimical that it makes any real spiritual life next to impossible; Jesus said that it was only by a miracle that a rich man could be saved. The shocking housing conditions of masses in our large cities stunts not only their bodies but their souls as well. If it is soul-making for which we care, can any one dare to say that international relations do not matter, that to harbor hatred toward another nation, or to engage in war with its devilries and its inevitable atmosphere of lies and passion leaves men's soul's unscathed? If we want to redeem men, we must redeem society. If this earth is a school for soul-education,

* *Life*, by S. Pearce Carey, p. 202.

then God is surely calling us to coöperate with Him in improving the school.

Again, our Lord taught us to seek first the Kingdom of God, and to pray that the Kingdom should come on earth. Of course the Kingdom of God does not just mean "social reform" (cf. Rom. 14^{17}), but if it means a society in which God's will is done, as it clearly does, it must inevitably include the redemption of social conditions and of international relations. Would our Lord teach us to pray and work for that which was impossible of attainment? There are, of course, those who tell us that we must try to establish the Kingdom on earth, although we must not hope for success. The struggle is good for our spiritual health. The service of our fellows is the way to character building. But to work for the Kingdom simply because it will do our own souls good in the process, is like responding to an appeal for famine relief because it will improve our characters to contribute to the funds.

It is true that the eternal values may triumph in the soul of the man who fights a losing battle. Though he see no sign of its coming in the world, yet for him the Kingdom he seeks has come.

> "Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
> Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."*

None the less to seek to build a city of God that God is not building cannot be a religious enterprise. Either we must believe that our enthusiasm for the redemption of every aspect of human life, our endeavors after a society expressive of brotherhood, are inspired by God and part of His purpose for the world, or we must get rid of them. Human history is not a sham fight. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord. The Christian ideal is not escape from the evils of the world into Nirvana, but the conquest of its life with God and for God. We are not trying to impose impossible ideals

* Matthew Arnold.

upon a hostile or indifferent universe. It is God's world, and in it we are fellow workers with Him in realizing a purpose which is after all the very reason why the world exists at all.

"Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them,
Or thrust the dawn back for one hour!
Truth, Love and Justice, if ye slay them
Return with more than earthly power:

Strive, if ye will, to seal the fountains
That send the Spring through leaf and spray:
Drive back the sun from the Eastern mountains
Then—bid this mightier movement stay." *

Granted that the consummation of all things, the coming of the Kingdom, is too vast to be staged upon this world of sense and time, yet the victory of God's purposes here we must believe to be part of His great plan. The Kingdom is to come "*on earth*" as well as "in heaven." "God in His patient eternity sooner or later brings justice to pass."† The Holy City, we must believe, is in our world as well as in the world beyond; it is "built on both sides of death."

Through these chapters we have been tracing the witness of the Bible to the missionary purpose of God. That witness is unmistakable. The world is not drifting on an aimless track, neglected by its Creator. God has a purpose of love for all men of all races. Through prophet and psalmist He called men to share in His purpose and to coöperate with Him. At length in the fulness of times His purpose took flesh in Jesus Christ, who lived and died that He might bring the whole world home to its Father. The missionary work of the Church is a continuation of that divine sending. In the love of God for all mankind is the inspiration and motive of missions.

Mr. Graham Wallas, in *Our Social Heritage*, speaks of the need for "a world-outlook, deeper and wider and more help-

* Alfred Noyes, *The Dawn of Peace.*

† Chateaubriand.

ful than that of modern Christendom."* But no man could seek for a world outlook deeper and wider than that which develops in the Bible. In the quest for the City of God to which it calls, is the one cause big enough to bind in one the nations of the world. "If the sentiments of a common humanity which moves your hearts when you hear of suffering in other countries, coupled with the sense that all nations are the children of one Father in heaven, were to lay hold of the peoples of the world and make them regard the peoples of other countries as fellow-citizens in the commonwealth of mankind, would not the attitude of states toward one another be changed, and changed fundamentally for the better? Would not the sense of co-operation temper the eagerness of competition and reinforce the belief that more will be gained for each and all by peace than has been gained, or ever will be gained, by war?"†

> "I am a wanderer: I remember well
> One journey, how I feared the track was missed,
> So long the city I desired to reach
> Lay hid; when suddenly its spires afar
> Flashed through the circling clouds; you may conceive
> My transport. Soon the vapors closed again,
> But I had seen the city, and one such glance
> No darkness could obscure."

If we too, like Paracelsus, have caught a glimpse of the City, we can go forward to "the teeming future, glorious with visions of a full success." But such visions, let us remind ourselves again, do not mean work accomplished but work revealed. The City is reached not only by "mounting up with wings as eagles," but by learning to walk and not faint. The way to the City is the way of the Cross. To tread it may mean days of thrilling adventure, but it will also mean years of patient, humdrum work. It means not only sentiments of brotherhood toward the Chinese and the African with whom

* p. 284.
† Bryce, *International Relations.*
‡ Browning, Robert.

we do not live and whom we may never see, but acts of brotherhood in daily life, in the home and the office and the Church. For the glory and the pain of seeking the City of God is that wherever we are and whatever we do we are bringing it down out of heaven to earth, or we are barring its entrance. Only the man in whose heart are the highways to Zion can ever tread them in the world without.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

It is not suggested that any one circle should discuss all the questions.

Chapter I

1. How do you decide which parts of the Old Testament teach wrong ideas about God? If the Old Testament is not Christian in its teaching is it of any value to the modern Christian?

2. Does the argument from the education of a child hold with regard to humanity and religion? (P. 4).

3. Discover from the Book of Amos the characteristics of the popular religion of his day.

4. "Hinduism is good enough for India and Christianity for us. Why should we interfere? What would Amos say?

5. Have we really got rid of the belief in national gods in modern Christendom?

Chapter II

1. One member might state the case for a Jew in Babylon who argued that the Jews should now give up the worship of Jehovah, and the circle might try to imagine the lines of Deutero-Isaiah's reply.

2. "There is a true sense in which every nation is a chosen nation, but most Britons believe it of the British nation in a wrong sense." Discuss.

3. In what ways could the exile be "a means of redemption for the world"?

4. What does Christianity owe to Judaism? Do you agree that all other religions are a preparation for Christianity? (See Introduction, pp. x-xii.)

5. In what sense did Jesus fulfill Isaiah 53?

Chapter III

1. Do you agree with the interpretation of the book of Jonah as a parable? Does the reference of Jesus to the story oblige us to regard it as historical?

2. "Jonah is not a book about a whale: it is an argument for the League of Nations." Discuss.

3. Jonah "is in many ways the culmination of Old Testament revelation." Do you think this is an exaggerated statement?

Chapter IV

1. "If Jesus really came to be a universal Savior surely He would not have confined His work to the Jewish nation. He actually forbade His disciples to preach to Gentiles, and His action in helping the Syro-Phenician woman was clearly exceptional and not to be argued from." Discuss.

2. Jesus "transcends the bounds of race and time as no one else in the world's history." What does this mean? Is it true?

3. "The whole structure of the foreign missionary enterprise rests upon a single text in the Gospels which Jesus probably never even uttered."

"We are committed to the missionary enterprise by the very nature of the gospel."

What is the missionary motive?

Chapter V

1. It has been argued that Jesus could not have uttered

the Great Commission because of the disobedience of the early Church. Was the Church disobedient? What was the real dispute between Peter and Paul regarding the Gentiles?

2. What do you think was Luke's main purpose in writing the Book of the Acts—

(*a*) To show what a great man Paul was? (*b*) To prove that Christianity was a universal religion? (*c*) To show how God guided the early Church? (*d*) To show the friendship between Rome and the Church? Or, (*e*) Was it something different from all these?

Chapter VI

1. "The Church should be a world fellowship whose claims transcend those of any nation." What about patriotism?

2. "In Christ there is neither Briton nor German, black nor white, capital nor labor, man nor woman." Is this a fair modern paraphrase of Paul's teaching? If so, what does it mean in practical life?

3. "The early Church may have been able to step over the bounds of race and nation, but the Church to-day cannot." Discuss.

4. Is it true to say that progress has always come along the line of fellowship and coöperation not of strife and competition?

Chapter VII

1. "On a common religious faith the brotherhood of man is to be securely founded." Is it necessary to believe in the Fatherhood of God in order to believe in the brotherhood of man?

2. Does history reveal progress toward the City of God?

3. How far does character depend on environment?

4. "If Christianity is true, the hope of the City of God on earth is no wild dream." Do you agree?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

5. Do we need a world outlook "more helpful than that of modern Christendom"?

6. In what ways can (*a*) an engineer, (*b*) a politician, (*c*) a dust-man, (*d*) a teacher, (*e*) a journalist, (*f*) a business man, (*g*) a mother, help to build the City of God?

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